

**MAKING MISSIONAL FAMILIES:  
THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN GUIDING FAMILIES TO CLAIM THEIR  
MISSIONAL IDENTITY, FORMATION, AND VOCATION**

**A THESIS  
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To Mark

The Godly, wonderful man I'm on mission with –

You have challenged me, loved me and pointed me to our Lord. I am deeply grateful to God for the gift of you and the gift of our 'life together' as partners in life, love, and ministry. I love you!

And to John and Anna

You are God's gifts to your dad and me – always be who God has called you to be. Be bright and salty. We believe in you and are cheering you on. We love you!

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## **PREFACE**

To be human is to be in a family. In family, there is birth and death, laughter and tears, accomplishment and defeat, joy and pain, hope and brokenness. Something so close to all of us can't help but be a compelling research topic. From my experience growing up in family, to the genesis of my own nuclear family, and including the experiences I have had with families in the congregations I have served, I have always been drawn to the function and dysfunction of family life. I "chased many rabbits" before I landed on family as my area of research. Why did I choose family? "Family" gets to the heart of ministry – it gets to people. In spite of my own bruises from all the family life that I have experienced and because of the remarkable intimacy in all the family life that I have experienced, I believe the family is worth our observations, our hopes, and our dreams.

People ultimately need God and they need community. And in family, both of those needs can be fulfilled. Together, families can follow Jesus Christ, love each other, and empower one another to make an impact for the kingdom! Now at the end of this project, I write more confidently than ever. I believe that the family can be redeemed in its brokenness and used to disciple the members of a family as well as bear witness to the love of Christ in the world. This is a remarkable idea – especially given the anecdotal wisdom of our day. But isn't that how God works! He loves to give us good things, he loves to change us, and he loves to surprise us. My prayer is that more people would be changed so that they would newly see their own family as gift and surprise all to the glory of God.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank God. He alone made, redeemed, called, and has sustained me through all my years of life, relationship, and ministry. In acknowledging that God alone is worthy of worship, I recommit myself to knowing him and being fully known. I reclaim my identity “in Christ” - and all that I am, all that I have, all that I do, I lay at the foot of the cross.

After acknowledging God, I turn to those with whom I live life this side of heaven. I am grateful for the joy of my family. First, my dear husband, Mark and our children, John and Anna – living life with you is my most precious vocation. I also acknowledge my parents for their encouragement in life, in ministry, and through this doctoral project. You were the first to introduce me to my Lord, Jesus. Also thanks to my siblings (Hope, Tripp, Holly, Mandy, and Audra) who have taught me much about life and love. I pray we will always call each other to God’s best.

I would not be who I am without the gift of mentors in the faith who have believed in me, guided me and challenged me. Special thanks to “my three wise guys” who have played that role: Jim Wood, Tom Gillespie, and Charles Talbert. I thank God for each of you.

Finally to the families of faith that I have been privileged to lead, to serve, to love, and to learn from: The Presbyterian Church of Bowling Green, First Presbyterian Church, Houston, Olive Chapel Baptist Church (where Mark served as pastor), the Peace College community – especially the students, and Peachtree Presbyterian Church. So much of what I have learned has been shaped with you in homes, in hospitals, in worship, in service, in dreaming, and in fellowship.



A huge thanks to the people and the staff of Peachtree Presbyterian Church. It is so energizing and such a privilege to lead alongside such passionate, authentic, and seeking people. I can only imagine what God has in store as we continue to ask how we are to be faithful serving Jesus in Atlanta and our world. Our journey together is woven into my thinking and my writing. There is no place I would rather be! Thanks also to the families at Peachtree who were a part of the pilot project informing this thesis project. You have taught me so much, and you are dear friends on the journey. I owe a special word of gratitude to Vic Pentz, Peachtree's pastor, for being both mentor and friend throughout my ministry and allowing me space and grace to finish this project. And thanks to Laura Poe, also a colleague on staff at Peachtree, for her careful review of my manuscript as well as for her friendship.

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis tracked the development and implementation of a training curriculum for missional families based on the sending of the 72 disciples in Luke 10. The curriculum was designed to equip Christian families to rediscover their missional identity, formation, and vocation, and make commitments to be missional families, deeply devoted to Jesus Christ, joining what God is doing in the world and making an impact for God's kingdom wherever they are. The thesis also traced the role of the church's ministry to families and explored missional descriptors for the family, including "domestic church." As a result of the project, participants became a learning community and individual families claimed the biblical model and realized their calling as missional families.

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### The State of the Family

The American family has been poked and prodded by a full range of people in our society. Scholars and psychologists, educators and clergy as well as everyday people living family life first-hand have all asked questions and proposed theories for the future demise or revival of the family. Many societal changes like divorce and having children out of wedlock have changed the fabric of the family. Though there are new forms, the family, in all its potential permutations, still remains the basic sociological unit of our culture and of our congregations. “Almost 90 percent of Americans will marry at some point in their lives, and virtually all who do either have, or want to have children. Further, surveys repeatedly show that family is central to the lives of most Americans. Family ties are their deepest source of satisfaction and meaning, as well as the source of their greatest worries (Mellman, Lazarus, Rivlin, 1990).”<sup>1</sup> Families are changing and as they continue to change, should there be hope or despair? Is family life in America, and more specifically, family life in Christian families in America disintegrating?

Balswick and Balswick suggest four socio-cultural dimensions of life that have contributed to the disintegration of the family: crises of consciousness, communication, community, and commodities.<sup>2</sup> *Consciousness crises* center on issues of morality and authority. Roles in work and at home are confusing because of choices now presented in

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<sup>1</sup>Arlene S. Skolnick and Jerome H. Skolnick, eds., *Family in Transition* (Boston: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 3.

<sup>2</sup> For a full description of these “modern” challenges to the family, see Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family: A Christian Perspective of the Contemporary Home*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 329-346.

the culture. Families who elect to be “co-producer families” have new strains.<sup>3</sup> Adequate childcare must be found and afforded. With two jobs and children come busyness and more choices about domestic roles and responsibilities. *Communication crises* spring from a lack of understanding and a lack of time to share and talk and enjoy common experiences in family life. Husbands and wives cannot find the time for their relationships, and parents struggle to spend time with their children.<sup>4</sup> *Community crises* include a lack of extended family networks and the need that family members have to be in community. Finally, *commodities crises* result because of the perceived need to acquire things, at the expense of family time, so that families have value and standing in the culture. Economic pressures are real. “A 1996 poll by the New York Times found that nearly three-quarters of all households have had a close encounter with layoff since 1980. In one-third of all households, a family member has lost a job, and nearly 40 percent more know a relative, friend or neighbor who was laid off.”<sup>5</sup> It is harder to make enough money to live as a family. “Most families now need two earners, working longer hours, to maintain the family living standard that could be provided by one earner in the 1950s and the 1960s.”<sup>6</sup> All these strains on relationships increase the opportunity for familial distress and, possibly, divorce.

Statistics confirm the impact of the strains on marriage and on the sustainability of marriages. David Popenoe, in his paper, “The State of Our Unions,” tells us that “[t]he American divorce rate today is nearly twice that of 1960, but has declined slightly since

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<sup>3</sup> Balswick and Balswick, 68.

<sup>4</sup> For statistics and analysis of time spent with children by working parents see Ellen Galinsky, “What Children Think of Their Working Parents,” in *Families in Transition*, eds Arlene S. Skolnick and Jerome H. Skolnick (Boston: Pearson Education, Inc, 2007), 304.

<sup>5</sup> Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Really Are* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 127.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 126.

hitting the highest point in our history in the early 1980s. For the average couple marrying for the first time in recent years, the lifetime probability of divorce or separation remains between 40 and 50 percent.”<sup>7</sup> More couples live together before marriage than ever before.<sup>8</sup> These statistics cast a dark shadow over the future of marriage and family life.

### **What About Christian Families**

“Christian families” are not separated from the challenges already named. George Barna consistently maintains that Christians are just as likely as non-Christians to divorce.<sup>9</sup> The same eroding stresses are facing Christian families: our fast paced culture only heightens the family’s challenge as they deal with two-career families, increased time and economic demands, and challenges to basic Christian values and truth. These crises are troubling, but the realities below the surface are even more spiritually dangerous – families are not living out lives of discipleship as God intends. Christian families seem to be ruled by culture (just like non-Christian families) rather than influencing their culture. There are few differences in their lifestyles, priorities, or day-to-day living. Even more tragic, many “Christian families” – moms and dads and children – have no conviction and no passion to be changed people who are a part of God’s work in the world changing other people. And even those who know there is more, who want to lead their kids spiritually, who know they are called to be missional

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<sup>7</sup> David Popenoe, “The State of Our Unions -The Social Health of Marriage in America 2007 Essay: The Future of Marriage in America,” Rutgers University, <http://marriage.rutgers.edu/Publications/SOOU/TEXTSOOU2007.htm> (accessed September 6, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Lynn M. Casper and Suzanne M. Bianchi, “Cohabitation” in *Family in Transition*, eds. Arlene S. Skolnick and Jerome H. Skolnick (Boston: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 174.

<sup>9</sup> The Barna Group, “Born Again Christians Just As Likely to Divorce As Are Non-Christians,” <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=170> (accessed February 7, 2008).

(being a part of God's work in their homes and in their jobs and in their communities), are simply not getting what they need from the church. The church must get relevant and begin to equip and lead families to be and live as missional families –God's agents in the world. Consider these families:

#### *Family #1*

This family lives in a rural context only a few houses down from their church. The mother and the father live together and both have service-oriented jobs. The father is a struggling alcoholic. Both have been married before and have brought children into the present marriage. They live on their family land in a mobile home. The mother's oldest daughter, who has a child born outside of wedlock, married at the age of 18. The mother's second daughter, 16 years old, has a new baby and is scheduled to marry her 19-year-old boyfriend. The family is active in church –the husband a deacon, the wife a former Sunday School teacher. The church throws a baby shower (at a neighbor's house) and a wedding shower (at the church) for the 16-year-old mother and bride.

#### *Family #2*

This family lives in the same context also only a few houses away from the same church. This is their first marriage though they married young. He has a service-oriented job and she has stayed at home to raise their two bright children until recently becoming the church secretary. The father of this family recently spoke to the pastor about the 16-year-old of Family #1. He is disturbed. Every time something like this happens at the church, he has to sit down with his two teenagers and explain that certain behaviors of

members of the church are inappropriate for Christians. He is looking for help in knowing how to raise his kids when families in the church look exactly like families outside the church.

### *Family #3*

This family lives in a suburban context several miles from their church. The mother and father married in their late twenties and have two young children. They are both elders in the church and teach Sunday School. Every year they attend their church-wide retreat. This year, the mother "discovers" that she is no longer in love with her husband while at the retreat. Her attraction for another married elder grows on the church retreat. She justifies her action saying that God gave her permission to let go of her marriage. Now two marriages are destroyed and four kids (two from each marriage) are part of broken homes.

### *Family #4*

This family lives in a suburban context several miles from their church and has two young children. The mother and the father both work long hours and the children are in daycare. The mother wants to quit her job but is unsure about what that would do for her family's income and her own self-esteem and happiness. The mother feels guilty at work and at home. Everything is hard. What is God telling her to do? She can't tell.

### *Family #5*

This family lives in a suburban context and has two middle-school-aged children. The gifted mother stays at home and volunteers in many community settings and the father works in a demanding job, which includes travel. The children attend an academically-challenging private school and are also very involved in athletics. One of the children is on a travel team that takes the family out of town several times a month. The family is very committed to their church but attends irregularly due to the demands of school, athletics, and just being tired. What is the relationship between their faith, their church, and their schedule? How does this family point people to Jesus Christ as they live out their busy lives?

### *Conclusion*

These real stories are representative of other families and stories in Christian communities. The families that sit in the pews of American churches have very real issues and challenges they face everyday. Teenage pregnancy, adultery, divorce, busyness, and lack of community are real inside the Christian community. Our Christian families are struggling to set their priorities, to develop their values, to interact with our culture, to apply their faith and, ultimately, to follow Jesus Christ.



## **Change for the Family and the Role of the Church**

Many potential solutions have been proposed to answer the challenges that families continue to face as well as to leverage the potential that families represent. Stephanie Coontz traces the historical issues that families face and concludes that, “families have been most successful wherever they have built meaningful, solid networks and commitments beyond their boundaries.”<sup>10</sup> Consider the impact of a mentoring relationship in the *Big Brother/Big Sister program*<sup>11</sup> or the learning from a seminar and small group developed by *The Fatherhood Initiative*<sup>12</sup> or the intervention of a retreat presented by *Marriage Savers*.<sup>13</sup> These and other programs and initiatives have changed individuals, families, and arguably through those changes, our culture.

It appears that the Christian families could benefit from a different kind of intervention which results in families not only “staying together” but becoming a dramatic “incarnational” force for good in our culture. No matter what the family looks like or what cultural trappings are in play, the family needs to rediscover a Christian missional identity – God’s intention and the church needs to play a role in guiding this rediscovery process.

## **Why the Church Has Failed**

What does the church have to offer in this rediscovery process? In many ways, the church has been ineffective and irrelevant in its dealings with twenty-first century families living in a post-modern context. The church has not challenged today’s family

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<sup>10</sup> Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 288.

<sup>11</sup> For more information about Big Brothers/Big Sisters, see their website: [www.bbbs.org](http://www.bbbs.org).

<sup>12</sup> For more information about The Fatherhood Initiative see their website: [www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org).

<sup>13</sup> For more information about Marriage Savers, see their website: [www.marriagesavers.org](http://www.marriagesavers.org).

to live missionally as seen in some of the common mistakes the church has made in ministering to the family.

*Rather than going to the family, the church has expected the family to come to the churches.* Other forces are much more aggressive in going to our families. The media goes after our kids and our families but the church is rather nonchalant in what should be our loving and impassioned pursuit. In our private culture, what does it mean to go to families? Pastors who have tried to set up a visit with a family understand the dilemma. The church must be much more creative in finding ways to go to our families. Why doesn't the church use internet and technology? Why not stay up-to-date with the real needs of our families? Meeting family needs can be a way to go to the family. The problem comes when meeting needs through programs becomes the end rather than the launching point to reaching and ministering and forming families. Another great way to "go to the house" is to reach out in solid children and student ministries. A little child often does lead families to sit with Jesus. The church must go to the family preaching peace and helping families grapple with what it means to be a Christian family and to be Christian to each other.

*The church has given up on the family unit.* The church has often viewed the family as dysfunctional and best served through therapeutic services. Counseling has been a substitute for a vital disciple-making family ministry. The church must equip the family to be Christian and do ministry. Psychotherapy and/or group counseling can be a vital partner with the church but it is inadequate without the identity work facilitated by the church.

*The church has not stayed with the family.* The church often baptizes or dedicates children and then is not engaged with the child in any significant way. We don't see them afterwards. It is easy, whether in a large or a small church, to let a family disappear after a baptism. Similarly, how easy is it to let a newly married couple who joined the church receive only the benefit of the "member rate" for their wedding ceremony rather than feeding them the satisfying food of the Gospel? The church has a responsibility to stay with the family rather than leaving the family to fend for itself spiritually. Jesus spoke of lost coins, lost sheep, and a lost son. What about a wayward family?

*The church has not stayed with and equipped the family.* The Church cannot simply give the message of peace and salvation in and through Jesus Christ. We need to equip the household to be the center of Christian discipleship. In fact, we need to encourage the family to be a community where conversion can happen. The church can become so enamored with programming for the parts of the family (parents, kids, and youth) that it does not encourage and equip families to be community where growth and relationship and discipleship are fostered. Again, the family is a crucible for discipleship. Discipleship in the family is inevitably sacrificial and painful and purifying because it is hard to be Christian when you live with, sleep with, parent, and carpool people. A process of conversion and becoming more like Jesus in the family is not only likely, it is absolutely vital for the survival and witness of the family in the world. Family is designed to be the beginning and the core for conversion's transforming work.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> A personal experience is informative: I grew up in a committed Christian family. My parents and my siblings had made public professions of faith in Jesus Christ. We did not, however, pray together or regularly serve together. With all of the commitments we had, there simply was no time. At a difficult time in our family life, my mother suggested we pray. The older teenage children (including me) would not buy it. It was foreign and fake to pray when we needed something rather than as a part of our life together. My parents did a remarkable job of parenting in many ways, but we did not act like the domestic church. We were not being transformed together. We went to church more than we were the church.

*The church has not called the family to continued conversion, reminding them that they are different.* The church is guilty of encouraging the family to look like the world. Pastors are bound by their cultural context. They can, in preaching and in teaching, inhibit the prophetic voice speaking to the family. How can the church continue to challenge families and equip families to be becoming more like Jesus and more missional? Marva Dawn offers some excellent questions to ask of our churches:

- Does the pastor preach the whole counsel of God and not just what is politically correct? Do the congregational leaders urge you and your children to wrestle with the whole Bible and not just read the parts you like?
- Does the pastor preach sermons and do the leaders teach classes that rebuke and challenge you and your children?
- Do the congregation's small groups –including youth groups –hold you and your children accountable, support you in your times of weakness, and pray for you consistently?
- Are there some people in your congregation you don't like?
- Are there people in the congregation from other ethnic and ability groups?
- Does the community's life demand a lot from you and your children and call forth your spiritual gifts?
- Does the congregation encourage and enable your children to memorize the Scriptures, learn essential doctrines, delight in Christian symbols, value the noblest hymns and the best new songs, and cherish the heritage of the faith?
- Does the congregation go beyond 'evangelism programs' to help each member, young or old, become equipped to share his or her faith, to be hospitable to strangers, to be a friend to those who need the gospel?
- Does my congregation live as an alternative, parallel society? In what ways? In what respects not?<sup>15</sup>

More anecdotally, do our parishioners even wonder if they should choose to let their children miss Sunday morning soccer games? Do they see the inconsistency between a Santa Claus who gives gifts at Christmas only if they are good and the Christ

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<sup>15</sup> Marva J. Dawn, *Is It A Lost Cause?* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 58-62.

Child who gives them the ultimate gift of salvation and relationship with God precisely because they can never be good?<sup>16</sup>

### **Making Missional Families**

Since God's choice of Abraham, God has formed, called, and used families, fallen and broken, to do His work in the world. No matter the form, no matter the culture, families can and always have played a role in God's work in the world. Jesus, himself, spoke sobering words about the family:

*Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather divisions! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three, they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother...*<sup>17</sup>

Jesus knew his call to costly discipleship would have ramifications for the family. It has been stated that God's most important change-agent in the world is not the family, but the church, which becomes the legitimate family for believers.<sup>18</sup> But God also blesses the biological family, in all its brokenness, through Jesus' mandate to keep marriages together and through his blessing over children. The family is a crucible for Christian discipleship, where church members live and learn and where they can be changed by the grace of God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. The family can be redeemed in its brokenness and used to disciple its members as well as to bear witness to the love of Christ in the world.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>17</sup> Luke 12:51-53.

<sup>18</sup> Brett Webb-Mitchell, "Open House: The American Family in the Household of God," *Theology Today* 52, no. 2 (July 1995): 247-252.

Additionally, families living missionally may have strategic impact for evangelism and transformation in our culture. As families' commitments to Jesus Christ make an impact in the places where they live and work and play, neighborhoods and cities can be changed. Churches must not miss the opportunity to equip families for missional living not only to be faithful but to be effective in reconciling people to God and each other in our post-modern culture. The love and justice of Jesus Christ goes out into our community incarnationally through missional families. Individuals and families are able to engage people who would never enter a church or participate in a traditional church program. Missional families get to places that the institutional church cannot reach. With this strategy, the multiplication of impact is limitless. There is new potential for changed people, cities, communities, and even our world. As Lisa Sowle Cahill writes:

The vocation of Christian families is to embody discipleship in all the concrete ways and in all the particular relationships that make up their daily existence, with all its complicated ties to others near and far. In so doing, the Christian family will begin to transform civil society and all the other co-arising institutions through and in which Christians exist with others on this planet.<sup>19</sup>

### **Summary of Research Topic**

In summary, Christian families, while coping with the unique demands placed on every individual family, must make a deliberate decision to live distinctively. The Church can provide tools and community which equip Christian families to rediscover their identity, their formation, and their mission in the world resulting in commitments to be missional families, deeply devoted to Jesus Christ joining what God is doing in the

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<sup>19</sup> Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Family: A Christian Social Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 17.

world and making an impact for God's kingdom wherever they are. Therefore, this research study explored the educational process of forming missional families in the local church. The following questions guided this inquiry:

- 1) What is the Biblical and theological basis for a missional family and for the church's responsibility to make missional families?
- 2) Given the Biblical model of the missional family, what can the church do to effectively challenge families to live as missional families in the current cultural and ministry contexts?
- 3) What kinds of learning and what kinds of tools might guide Christian families into missional living?
- 4) What are the identity, spiritual formation, and mission of a missional family? How might a curriculum guide families to understand their own identity, formation, and mission and make commitments to be missional families?

The answers to these questions began with the development of a Biblical paradigm for intentional and strategic ministry with families based on the "sending of the 72" in Luke. The church must equip families. Like the apostles, the church must go into the house, preach the peace of a relationship with Jesus Christ and the peace of covenant relationships within the family, and then call the family to impact the world in the name of Jesus Christ. First, the church must engage and give families a pathway to be the "domestic church," the place where faith is born and grown and lived. Families must then, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, intentionally choose to walk the difficult and unpredictable pathway of missional living. If the church would invite, and families would respond by the power of the Spirit, our neighbors and our cities would stop and pay

attention. All the prophecies of family doom and gross enculturation could begin to fade away. Missional families would be changed and changing our world in the name of Jesus Christ.

From the biblical and theological framework, a curriculum to grow missional families was developed and carried out as a pilot project with eight families in the spring of 2007 at Peachtree Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia. A part of the PC(USA), Peachtree is a “thinking-evangelical” church that is in the process of seeking to understand what it means to be a missional church given its history as a long-established mainline congregation. The staff and session of the church are committed to this vision. Peachtree has historically been a church committed to biblical and relevant preaching, as well as to engagement in the city and world. It is also a church with a vibrant and growing family demographic, baptizing twice as many babies as any other Presbyterian church in the United States. Developing tools for making missional families is a timely and critical need for Peachtree as it continues to be the church that God intends in the city of Atlanta.

Within the Peachtree context, eight families became a learning community in order to discover what it means to be missional family and in order to make commitments to be missional families. The pilot project led these families into a process of discovering their identity as Christian families on mission in the world. Families were required to follow a regimen of regular meals together, prayer and devotionals, and family play throughout the Missional Family Training Module (See Appendix A). In addition to these individual practices, families attended a series of six sessions to address covenant and Christian identity, spiritual formation and Christian commitments, and



mission and living as Christian families. Educational strategies employed included peer learning, encompassing varied learning styles, and multi-generational learning, engaging different mediums including lecture and discussion as well as active learning. These strategies took into account the unique characteristics of the adult learner. A pre-assessment and post-assessment were used to gauge the effectiveness of the learning module. Finally, several of the families were video-interviewed at the end of the pilot as another assessment and medium for input.

This study is intentionally limited and these limitations have shaped the outcomes. All eight families are member families of Peachtree Presbyterian Church. Each family is a two-parent family actively engaged in the life of the church. All have young children (preschool to elementary aged) and the participating parents are professing followers of Jesus committed to the journey of discipleship in and through their family life. The families vary in years married. Some wives worked and others did not.

## **Definitions**

The following concepts are important to define as they shape the purposes and processes of the pilot project:

*Christian family:* Although a family could be composed of one adult or even one person, for the purposes of this thesis, the Christian family is a family where mom and dad are intentionally following Jesus Christ. They may have come into a relationship with Jesus Christ as children or as adults but both profess that Jesus Christ gives their life meaning and purpose, forgiveness of sin, and a calling to follow Him. As Christians, the husband

and wife view their marriage as a covenant relationship. As they love and serve each other in their day-to-day life, they honor God. Their marriage is an integral part of their discipleship. The way that husband and wife treat each other is based on their commitment to Christ from which flows their love of one another. The way that husband and wife make decisions and set priorities is shaped by their desire to follow Jesus. In a real sense, husband and wife act as a mirror to the other, challenging and calling each other to know and love Jesus Christ. If there are children, the Christian family lives out their faith, hoping and praying that the children will also commit their lives to Jesus.

*Missional Family:* The missional family understands its family life as a large part of its Christian vocation. The concept of the missional family takes the concept of the Christian family and places it in a post-Christian context. The missional family understands that the culture and people within the culture do not believe that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord. There is apathy or, at times, hostility to the tenets of Christianity within the culture. Those tenets include Jesus' lordship, covenantal morality and sexual ethics, the human need for God, and God's saving response in Jesus Christ. Given its context, the missional family is called to be inwardly strong (growing in relationship with God and with each other) as well as outwardly focused (seeing the world as God sees the world and participating in His work in the family's neighborhood, city and world).

*Domestic Church:* A phrase coined by the early Church fathers and re-engaged by the Catholic tradition in documents coming out of Vatican II, the "domestic church" is a term for the nuclear family. As "domestic church," the nuclear family acts as the place where

the gospel is shared, taught, and lived out. This concept is one of the key concepts introduced to the families in the pilot project.

*Family Creed:* Families will develop a family creed as a part of their work together. Family members will reflect on their core beliefs about their faith. These beliefs are often impacted by the story of the family or by the family's specific life-season. In most cases, parents are the primary writers of the creed with the children participating in affirming the creed.

*Family Covenant:* Families will also compose a family covenant using the core values that shape their interpersonal relationships. The covenant reflects the family members' understanding of their commitment to one another as fellow disciples following Jesus and helping one another live lives that are faithful and fulfilling.

*Family Commitments:* Families will design their family commitments using the core practices that they will regularly engage to continue to grow in their relationships with God and with each other. These commitments include but are not limited to traditional spiritual disciplines. The core practices are very specific to family schedules, personalities, and life stage. These core practices vary widely and might range from an annual camping trip or a weekly family pizza night to forgiveness and reading the Bible at dinner time.

*Family Calling* – Finally, families will conclude with the development of a family calling using their core contexts. These contexts include neighborhood, social clubs and activities, service organizations, schools, work, and any other community involvement. Missional family members see the places where they naturally spend time through God’s lens. With whom are we in relationship? How do we live authentically and compassionately? How can we show the love of Christ? How do we represent the character of Christ? Where is there injustice or despair? Where can we make a difference?

## **Overview of the Thesis**

*Chapter 2* will present a biblical and theological framework for the church’s role in making and equipping missional families. Beginning with God’s covenant with Abraham and walking through the Biblical narrative, the familial nature of covenant will be explored. Acts 10, the second sending of the apostles, will provide a three-fold pattern for ministry with families: Go into the house; preach peace; stay in the house and make the domestic church.

*Chapter 3* will consider literature relevant to the formation of the missional family and the church’s role in that formation. The chapter will explore the historical paradigms of the church’s ministry toward the family represented in literature. It will also include a review of the ways that missional families are described and labeled. Finally, it will trace a theoretical and methodological basis for the missional curriculum. Both practical and theoretical literature written by psychologists, professors, Christian educators, pastors, and theologians are included in the literature survey.

*Chapter 4* will review and critique the methodology of the pilot project. Families were asked to become a learning community reflecting on their individual experiences and challenging each other to make new commitments. Beginning with the initial contract, each family was asked to integrate explored concepts into its own life experience.

*Chapter 5* will explore the impact of experiences of the families as a result of the implementation of the project design. The data gathered from the participants including examples of creeds, covenants, commitments, and callings will be explored and evaluated in light of the curriculum, the desired outcomes, and the integration of the concept into the life of the families. The pre-assessment and post-assessment, as well as the interviews, will inform the evaluation of effectiveness towards transformation, commitment and, ultimately, making missional families.

*Chapter 6* will review the key findings of the project and guiding principles that are crucial to forming missional families and principles that are crucial for the church to empower families to engage the process of becoming missional families. This chapter will discuss the next steps that have been taken with the theoretical framework and missional curriculum. The potential future applications of the framework and curriculum within the church context will also be considered.

*Appendices* will detail the curriculum and learning tools engaged in the pilot project.

## Chapter 2

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

This chapter will address research question number one: What is the biblical and theological basis for the missional family and for the church's responsibility to make missional families? The following discussion lays out God's intentions for the family in covenant relationship and details the faithful response that the church must make in order to equip the family to live up to God's intentions.

In Genesis, God established a decisive pattern. From the beginning, God created humans to be in relationship with him and with each other. When God created Adam, he also created Eve. Their humanness, their relationship together, and their relationship with God all reflected the image and nature of God. Man and woman were covenant partners with each other and, together in relationship with God, stewarded and populated the earth. So God creates families and then he calls families to be a part of what He is doing in the world.

The message to God's people is a familial and household message. God promised Abraham,

*And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.*<sup>20</sup>

The very heart of God's promises to Abraham involved family and children as a part of the covenant and an example of God's blessing.<sup>21</sup> God related to his people as a people –

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<sup>20</sup> Genesis 17:7 (English Standard Version).

<sup>21</sup> See Rodney Clapp, *Families at the Crossroad* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 70. , for this idea in the context of how families are used by God but are not the New Testament primary vehicle for spiritual transformation. The “first family” is the church though God calls the family to be redeemed and used in the world.

children and adults and families are all included in God's plan. God blessed Abraham and his family so that they could be a blessing to other families inviting all to know the God who blesses.

In Exodus, as God calls Moses and prepares to rescue his people, it is clear that this message is for his people – for adults and for children, for the generations. God clarifies in Exodus 10:2 that he is performing the miraculous signs up to the exodus so that the story can be told to children and grandchildren. This story told and re-told will help families continue to know who God is and how He is covenanting with his people.

Doug Stuart writes,

Moses and successive Israelites have been provided with irresistibly interesting stories to tell their children and grandchildren, not for the sake of their entertainment value they held but so that their children and grandchildren would understand who God really is and how important it is to be rightly in covenant with him.<sup>22</sup>

When the redemptive exodus moment is discussed in the future, God gives instructions on how to teach the children. Nurturing the children in the stories and the covenant is a clear expectation for the families of Israel, God's people.<sup>23</sup> Exodus 12 records the instruction, "And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.'"<sup>24</sup> As parents tell the story, parents will teach the children that they are part of the covenant.<sup>25</sup>

They have been saved to be a part of God's plan for the world.

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<sup>22</sup> Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus: The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 243.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 290.

<sup>24</sup> Exodus 12:26-7 (English Standard Version).

<sup>25</sup> In Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 127. , Fretheim enumerates this as a theme throughout Exodus in 12:26, 13:8 and 14.

Later in the Old Testament,<sup>26</sup> Deuteronomy reiterates the place of children (and therefore, families) in the covenant.<sup>27</sup> Patrick Miller described the family life that Deuteronomy dictates: “The picture is that of a family continually in lively conversation about the meaning of their experience with God and God’s expectations of them.”<sup>28</sup> Children were a part of the covenant and parents were to speak with them about the covenant over and over again:

*Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long<sup>29</sup>*

Through the rest of the Old Testament, the family is seen at its best and at its worst. The narrative includes the deep commitment of a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in the book of Ruth but it also includes a son’s betrayal of his father in the story of David and Absalom. Children will reject the way of the Lord<sup>30</sup> and others will faithfully keep the covenant. Both the Psalms and the Proverbs provide instructions to raise children to know the story and to be a part of the covenant. The psalmist writes,

*..[we will] tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders he has done. He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and forget the words of God, but keep his commandments.<sup>31</sup>*

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<sup>26</sup> For a thorough list of Old Testament scriptures that involve families, see Herbert Anderson, Don S. Browning, Ian S. Evison and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, eds., *The Family Handbook* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 195.

<sup>27</sup> See also Deuteronomy 1:36, 39; 4:9-10; 4:40; 5:9, 29; 11:1-7, 19; 29:22-23.

<sup>28</sup> Patrick Miller, *Deuteronomy: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 107.

<sup>29</sup> Deuteronomy 6:1-2 (English Standard Version).

<sup>30</sup> See for example the sons of Eli, the priest, who “had no regard for the Lord” in 1 Samuel 2:12.

<sup>31</sup> Psalm 78:4-7 (English Standard Version).



Proverbs gives a primer for parents and the community to teach the youth. It is addressed to youth and establishes the centrality of “fearing the Lord.” The beginning of wisdom is in the fear of the Lord.<sup>32</sup> Children must be taught and nurtured to understand the covenant and the way of right living. The teaching and nurture should begin at an early age and is the responsibility of the parent.<sup>33</sup> Family life and the nurture of children is always a part of the people of God and plays a role in the ways God chooses to act out his plan of redemption and renewal.

When Jesus came into the world as the Son of God, he experienced the humanness of being in a family. He had a mother, Mary, and an earthly (rather than biological) father, Joseph, as well as brothers. He lived life in the family business of carpentry and with his family engaged in the things of God. Though Jesus called people to live kingdom priorities which were at times at odds with commitment to the family, he choose to perform his first miracle at a wedding and quoted the Genesis passage about man and woman becoming one to the Pharisees.<sup>34</sup> And on the cross at the end of his earthly life, Jesus cared for his mother, Mary, by connecting her with his disciple and close friend, John. David Thomas noted that Jesus’ central message of loving God and

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<sup>32</sup> Proverbs 1:8 (English Standard Version).

<sup>33</sup> In Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 15-31: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 204. , Waltke discusses the purposes of Proverbs as Israel’s moral primer and the role of parents as training children from the beginning of their lives in the covenant in order that they will not depart from the right way.

<sup>34</sup> In Charles H. Talbert, *Ephesians and Colossian: Paideia commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007) prepublication manuscript, 3-4. , Talbert further expounds on Jesus’ support of marriage and right relationships between men and women and therefore, his support of family: “The canonical Jesus celebrates marriage as good (John 2:1-11). He stands for monogamy and permanence in marriage (Mk 10:2-9) as well as for equal responsibility for the marriage (Mk 10:11-12). He opposes domination and/or deception in relations between the sexes (Matt 5:27-30; contrast Judith 12:16).”

loving neighbor, what Jesus called the greatest commandment, most certainly applied and still applies inside the family as well as in the church, synagogue, city, and world.<sup>35</sup>

In the New Testament, even Peter's sermon at Pentecost speaks of a gospel for families:

Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.<sup>36</sup>

The gospel was intended to change families and generations of people and the gospel was for people near and far—all over the world.<sup>37</sup> The good news of forgiveness and a relationship with God in Jesus Christ continued to be preached by the disciples. They were sent out armed with a message of change. At first, Jesus sent out the 12 but soon the 72 were commissioned and sent out. In Luke, two sending narratives (9:52-56 and 10:1-12) emphasize Luke's theology of mission: God sent so that the people in Samaria (9:52-56 and correlated in Acts 8) and the Gentiles (Luke 10:12 and continued in Acts 13-28) would hear the Gospel and be included in God's covenant.<sup>38</sup>

The sending of the 72 (or 70) is a lesser-known missionary journey. Jesus' commission to the 72 in Luke 10 indicates again that God always intended that the family be converted and, collectively, become part of God's plan to reach the world with the good news of His love in Jesus Christ. The 72 were commissioned and sent out in pairs

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<sup>35</sup> David Michael Thomas, "God Created Very Human Families," *Family Ministry* 15, no.2 (2001): 55.

<sup>36</sup> Acts 2:38-39 (English Standard Version).

<sup>37</sup> John R.W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Bible Speaks Today* (Leicester, England: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 78.

<sup>38</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (Macon, Georgia: Smith & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 2002), 121.

to two locations. They are to go to the *oikia*, the household, and to the *polis*, the city:

*After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'"*<sup>39</sup>

Matson concludes that the two-fold sending to the city and to the household which is soon taken up and fulfilled in the Acts narratives is expected of all who are sent.<sup>40</sup> It will be the house rather than the "synagogue or temple [which will] become the typical location of the gospel's reception and the church's growth."<sup>41</sup>

The literary connection of Luke-Acts led scholars to connect Jesus' commissioning of the 70 to the household conversions in Acts. There were three: the conversion of Cornelius with his household, the Philippian jailer with his household, and finally, Lydia with her household. One cannot ignore that families, not simply individuals, were transformed.

In the conversion of Cornelius<sup>42</sup>, Peter entered the home of Cornelius. The fact that he even entered the home was significant and deserved attention. This action represented the new day brought about by the Spirit –the gospel is for everyone. The

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<sup>39</sup> Luke 10:1-9 (English Standard Version).

<sup>40</sup> David Lertis Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 37.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>42</sup> Acts 10.

God-fearing Cornelius, who was already a faithful giver and man of prayer, and his entire family believed and were baptized.

The conversion of Lydia and her household is next.<sup>43</sup> Lydia, a God-fearer, was attentive to the message Paul preached by the river. She, too, was baptized with her household. Paul and Silas then returned to her home, stayed in her home enjoying her hospitality, and disciplined her. Lydia played a key role in supporting the ministry of Paul and a home-church.

The story of the conversion of the jailer and his house<sup>44</sup> immediately follows. The imprisoned Paul and Silas, rather than despairing, were praising God. An earthquake violently shook the prison, unfastening chains and opening doors. Assuming that the prisoners would escape, the jailer was about to kill himself when he was interrupted by a witness. Paul reported that all prisoners are accounted for. The amazed jailer asked what he must do to be saved –a wonderful reversal of his attempt to take his life. Paul and Silas then preached the message to all in the jailer's household, resulting in their baptism. "And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God."<sup>45</sup> The conversion of a head of the household often resulted in the conversion of the entire house.<sup>46</sup>

Admittedly, the socio-economic unit of household in the Mediterranean world does not equate exactly to the nuclear family household today. Then the household included slaves and extended family. But comparisons are easily made. The Biblical

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<sup>43</sup> Acts 16:11-15.

<sup>44</sup> Acts 16:16-40.

<sup>45</sup> Acts 16:34 (English Standard Version).

<sup>46</sup> In Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, eds., *Luke – Acts: The Expositor's Bible Commentary, revised* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 971., a list of household conversion in light of a head of household conversion is made and includes Luke 10:2-48, 11:14, 16:15, 18;8, and 1 Corinthians 16:15.

household was the location and center of economic, sociological, and religious activity but the household was also the family. In today's individualized and non-agrarian culture, the nuclear family is the sociological and economic unit. It is a logical conclusion that today, people and families live in households and should be ministered to and witnessed to in their households, as they were in early Christianity. God's love reaches out to the individual, into the family, and to the whole world. His intention is to be in relationship with all through the life and death of Jesus Christ. The good news Jesus gave the seeker Nicodemus in the gospel of John goes out to the world:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.<sup>47</sup>

### **A Pattern for Ministry**

The message the Church must offer in this privatized, individualized society is unchanging. God has always come to his people. Luke 10 reports that Jesus sent the people ahead (to the homes and to the city) to the places he himself intended to go. In church plant and "cutting edge" ministry venues, the city is always considered and prioritized. Churches are anxious to open coffee houses and do "Generation X" ministry. Churches believe in and embrace marketplace ministry. But what about the home? It is almost as if the church has given up on its transformation. Many have bought – hook, line and sinker – an individualist theology and rationale for the church's focus on evangelizing. Jesus talked about and sent out the 70 to an incarnational ministry for households. As always, God interrupts our existence and comes to people where we are.

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<sup>47</sup> John 3:16-17 (English Standard Version).

God is a sending God, who sent his son Jesus Christ into the world and now sends the church to families, and ultimately sends the families to the culture –all to bear witness to God’s redemptive plan.

People live in families, and in Acts, are converted in families. Because the family household is where people live today, the church must minister to the family unit and in turn, lead and equip the family unit for ministry. Using the household formula for a paradigm, an intentional evangelical family ministry in our churches was created as the basis for a pilot project defining the process of creating “missional families”. The church must:

- 1) *Go into the house and preach “Peace;”*
- 2) *Stay in the house; and*
- 3) *Form the house into the missional church.*

### **Go Into the House and Preach Peace**

The first task of the church in its strategy is to go into the house. The church must go to the many different forms of family and preach peace. The church must take up the prophetic responsibility to call families to be distinct and Christian. The knowledge that families need to be changed and transformed must translate into action. Other influencers are going into the house –the television, the mailman, alcohol and drugs, the newspaper. The church must sense an **urgency** to go. The church must be intentional about going. But going is also not enough. The church must preach “peace” – the peace of God that is in Jesus Christ.

It is instructive to note that when the resurrected Jesus appears to his disciples (likely in a household) in Luke 24:36, he offers a “peace” greeting. When Jesus enters a home, he brings peace. Jesus greets his disciples in the same manner that he teaches the 70 to greet the households they will visit.<sup>48</sup> Families desperately need the consistent peace that comes from God in an inconsistent world. Families need the peace of God that is faithful when family relationships are disintegrating. The church must not be afraid to preach a peace that has expectations and responsibilities and not simply benefits. Following Jesus as disciples and as a family is costly and demands life change and new patterns of life together. As the church goes into the house, the church can help the family establish a Christian identity.

#### *Christian Identity: Love God and Each Other*

The church must equip the family to be at peace and in covenant with God and with each other. God has always been a God who covenants with his people and then calls his people to be people of the covenant. In covenant, the people of God have a new identity and live differently.<sup>49</sup> Christian families must claim this new identity. This new identity comes out of a commitment to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Parents lead the way in making this new way of life a reality. It is a calling that results in a life change. Jesus called his disciples into a new way of life. Their calling involved repentance and

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<sup>48</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke: Sacra Pagina* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 401.

<sup>49</sup> See Diana R. Garland, *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 1999), 333-342. for a thorough treatment of covenant. God has covenanted with his people and we in turn covenant with each other as families. Covenants 1) are the result, not the origin of loving, faithful relationships, 2) endure, 3) cost, 4) involve both freedom and responsibility, 5) are defined by the participants not the expectations of others, and 6) are intentional and have purpose.

following Jesus as Lord.<sup>50</sup> Families must choose individually and collectively to follow Jesus whole-heartedly.

In Luke 9, Jesus was with his disciples and asked them what they believe about Jesus in comparison to what other people might believe about Jesus. Peter's confession that Jesus is the "Christ of God" was followed with a call to a radically different lifestyle. Knowing who Jesus is (a confession) is the first step toward living the way he asks.<sup>51</sup> The journey toward living as a missional family must begin with a creed or faith claim focused on who Jesus Christ is.

The peace that we find in being right with God in Jesus Christ carries over into family relationships. Family members must be at peace with God in Jesus Christ and that covenant relationship in turn will allow family members to collectively be at peace with one another as Christian disciples, and as a Christian household. 1 John admonishes believers,

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*<sup>52</sup>

It is important to ask how peace with God might carry over into daily household living.

In family there is great potential for pain. Family members know each other best and can

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<sup>50</sup> See the calling stories in the gospels to see Jesus' call to repentance and follow: Matthew 4:17-20, Mark 1:16-20, Luke 5:1-11, and John 1:35-42.

<sup>51</sup> Fred B. Craddock, *Luke: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 129. Craddock notes that Luke places the confession of Peter as the Christ, Jesus' description of his death, and the demands of discipleship linked in succession. Craddock's point leads to the idea that understanding Jesus as Lord and what it meant for him to be sent leads all disciples from belief to changed hearts, lives, and actions. In addition, in Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John* (New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1992), 85., Talbert describes the effects discipleship has on disciples before Easter as (a) public confession of faith, and (b) bringing others to Jesus and the effects after Easter as (a) confession of faith in Jesus, (b) mission to the world – being sent and (c) love of one another. This post-Easter description re-enforces identity, formation and mission as key elements to the life of the disciple then and now.

<sup>52</sup> 1 John 4:7-8, 11 (English Standard Version).



inflict serious pain, even devastation, on each other. How should members interact together as members of a household where Jesus is Lord?

Balswick and Balswick are instructive here.<sup>53</sup> They provide a theological basis or framework for family relationships and Christian family identity. They identify four overlapping elements that spiral to form a mature covenant relationship within a Christian relationship: commitment, grace, empowering, and intimacy: 1) *Commitment* is the first element. A mature covenantal relationship starts with an initial bilateral unconditional commitment. Both parties are involved. In this case, it is the husband and wife who make an intentional decision to love each other forever – “til death we do part.” It is important to recognize that children initially are not partners in a bilateral covenant relationship. However, eventually, children become participating, willing participants in a Christian family identity and covenant relationship. 2) Commitment leads to the element of *grace*, next in the covenant relationship spiral. Christian families provide an ethos of mutual grace and forgiveness. According to the apostle Paul, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”<sup>54</sup> So, family members bring their sin and selfishness as well as their experiences of pain and brokenness into the covenant relationship. And family members will hurt each other deeply many times over the course of life together. But, a Christian family who has covenanted to be in relationship learns the rhythm of hurt and forgiveness and restoration and reconciliation. Families learn to extend grace to each other. 3) Grace then leads to the third element, *empowering*. As “spiritual growth goes on in family members, it is possible for them to

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<sup>53</sup> Jack Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 29.

<sup>54</sup> Romans 3:23 (English Standard Version).

serve and give to each other in unlimited ways, in extraordinary ways.”<sup>55</sup> In empowering each other, members of the family call each other to be what God is calling them to be. Family members are “mirrors” who see gifts and talents in each other. They desire the best for each other and want each to live their dreams and passions. Ultimately they want all family members to live as mature followers of Jesus who use and share their gifts with the world. 4) After empowering, the final element of the theological framework is *intimacy* – families know each other and are known.

The spiral formed by maturing in these elements provides a “crucible” for Christian discipleship and growth and an environment for the discovery of God’s calling and God’s best for all members of the family. The church should help the family ask questions and lead them to an understanding of Christian commitment and covenant. Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan<sup>56</sup> is instructive for this understanding. After describing the great commandment of loving God and loving neighbor, Jesus was asked, “Who is [our] neighbor?” In response, he told the story of a Jewish man who was robbed and left for dead on the side of the road. A priest and a Levite passed the man without stopping. Finally, a Samaritan, who would have been hated by the nearly dead Jewish man, stopped in order to help. The Samaritan cared for the Jewish man in an extraordinary way, taking him to shelter and supporting him into his recovery.<sup>57</sup> The Greek word Jesus used for neighbor is *plesion*, translated ‘one who is near.’<sup>58</sup> Jesus’ words most certainly apply to familial relationships – the “nearest” earthly relationships

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<sup>55</sup> Balswick and Balswick, 29.

<sup>56</sup> Luke 10: 25-37.

<sup>57</sup> In Leon Morris, *Luke: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Leicester, Intervarsity, 1988), 208. , the point is made about the extraordinary nature of the Samaritan’s care. His gift to the innkeeper of two denarii would be equivalent to up to 2 months boarding. The Samaritan also ensured that he would come back and cover other expenses if necessary.

<sup>58</sup> Robert C. Tannehill, *Luke: Abingdon New Testament Commentaries* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 182.

humans have. Like the broken and robbed man, family members experience their own challenges in everyday life. Will family members, who should be encouraging and empowering, pass their own flesh and blood who are in need? Or will family members encourage and empower, help and heal each other as a reflection of their love of God and each other?

The *haustafel* codes in Paul's letters and intimated throughout the New Testament should also be considered when exploring the relationships between members of the family and their relationship to faith.<sup>59</sup> These codes provided the norm of behavior for household relationships: husband and wife, parent and child, and owner and slave. Their appearance throughout the New Testament is indicative of the significance the early church placed on family as a part of living faith. Reflecting on the *haustafel*, James Dunn writes, "The relationships within the family and household were themselves part of Christian vocation and indeed, we may say, were the first place where responsibility to the Lord should come to expression and be put to the test."<sup>60</sup> Though often taken out of context, these codes represent a cultural norm of relationships within the economic and familial household units, which was designed to create order.

Some scholars believe that Paul took these codes to a new level. Because of a commitment to a new way of life to which Jesus has called his followers, these family relationships were changed. Though order was necessary and roles were different, mutual submission (and encouragement and empowering) was to be lived out in the family. The "submit to one another" in Ephesians 5:21 cannot be separated from the husband and

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<sup>59</sup> Household codes are found in Colossians 3:18 – 4:1, Ephesians 5:22-6:9, 1 Peter 2:18-3:7, 1 Timothy 2:8-15, 6:1-2 and Titus 2:1-10.

<sup>60</sup> James Dunn, "The Household Rules in the New Testament." in *The Family in Theological Perspective*, ed. Stephen C. Barton (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 56.

wife *haustafel* model.<sup>61</sup> Still others wondered how to place this scripture alongside Galatians 3:27-28, affirming:

*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*<sup>62</sup>

Acknowledging the authority of the canon and the supposition that scripture cannot contradict scripture, one could read that the Galatians passage applies to the worshipping community, while the Ephesians text applies to the work and order of the home. Both worshipping community and household business are the same household. According to Talbert,

In the Pauline communities of the first century, the two communications were viewed as complementary, not as contradictory. Modern Christians may rightly regard both as normative, each in its own sphere. To do so, however, involves a refusal to apply the household codes inappropriately to the modern Christian family. This is what not to do! The household codes in early Christian writings never functioned to set forth the order for marriages that God intended in creation.<sup>63</sup>

In regard to the many points of view, the conclusion must be drawn that it is difficult to apply the *haustefeln* to modern family life without deep historical, critical, and hermeneutical process.

The family unit, like the individual disciple, must view itself as distinct. It is a distinct and covenanting community. Jean Vanier, the founder of the L'Arche community clarifies this point: "To be covenanted to others [like family members are to one another] is to be earthed to them. It is God who has called us together to be a sign of fidelity and of love. If we begin to live in covenant as we enter community, it is sealed as

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<sup>61</sup> David K. Clark, "Foundations of Marriage and the Family" in *Handbook of Family Religious Education*, eds. Blake J. Neff & Donald Ratcliff (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1995), 14.

<sup>62</sup> Galatians 3:27-8 (English Standard Version).

<sup>63</sup> Charles H. Talbert, "Are There Biblical Norms for Christian Marriage?," *Family Ministry: Empowering Through Faith* 15, no.1 (2001): 16-17.

a particular moment, maybe a very solemn one.”<sup>64</sup> Our solemn covenant to God in Jesus Christ and to each other through the power of the Holy Spirit provides evidence that God is indeed at work in a fallen world and in fallen people. As the church goes into the house, the church will reinforce the family’s Christian identity. The family will be challenged to love God and each other.

### **Stay in the House**

The second step of the church’s strategy to make missional families is to stay in the house. The church must be a part of the family life and equip the family to grow in its discipleship. It is not enough to preach the gospel. The church must not only strive to create a “converted” family; it must go beyond conversion to making families of disciples. Second Peter benedicts its audience with an admonition: “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”<sup>65</sup> The church must send the family to school with the teacher, Jesus, so that its members can grow and become more like him. Dallas Willard defines Christian spiritual formation as “the redemptive process of forming the inner human world so that it takes on the character of the inner being of Christ himself. In the degree to which it is successful, the outer life of the individual becomes a natural expression or outflow of the character and teachings of Jesus.”<sup>66</sup> Spiritual formation changes what we choose to do and what we choose not to do. Spiritual formation changes the way we treat each other. The church must call the family to intentional spiritual formation, first equipping the parents to be evangelists, models of discipleship, and teachers to their children in the house. As the church stays in the house,

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<sup>64</sup> Jean Varnier, *Community and Growth* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 82.

<sup>65</sup> 2 Peter 3:18 (English Standard Version).

<sup>66</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2006), 105.

it will lead the family into spiritual formation. Diana R. Garland, draws on the work of Craig Dykstra and others to identify twelve family faith practices:<sup>67</sup>

*1) Worshipping God together:* This includes the practice of prayer and family worship as well as participation as a family in corporate worship.

*2) Telling and reading the Christian story to one another:* Families reading the story hearkens back to formation instructions in Deuteronomy. The power of the story being told and re-told in the family weaves the story into the family story.

*3) Sharing with one another our interpretations of the Bible and God's continuing work through history and today:* Families must practice applying God's truths to the everyday life of the family.

*4) Having patience with one another's shortcomings and encouraging one another as we seek to live the life to which God has called us:* This practice was discussed above through the work of Balswick and Balswick. Grace and forgiveness and empowering are all practiced in family relationships.

*5) Praying together and by ourselves:* Prayer can be at meals and at bed times as well as throughout the day. It is critical that parents lead by example in praying. Parents can expect the children's ability to pray scaffolds according to their age.

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<sup>67</sup> Diana R. Garland, *Sacred Stories of Ordinary Families* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 129.

Parents can expand the family types of prayer : thanksgiving, praise, forgiveness, supplication, intercessory.

*6) Serving others as a means of serving God:* Families should grow in the area of service as well. Service to neighbor as well as to the poor and needy is important for this practice.

*7) Giving generously our money, time, and other resources for the work of the church and to care for the needs of others:* Again, modeling and teaching in this area are vital. Families must practice stewardship of the resources God has given them.

*8) Welcoming others into our homes and to our tables, especially those who are strangers:* Hospitality is a key feature of Christian community. Families show the world the love of God as they welcome all including the stranger.

*9) Listening and talking attentively and empathetically with one another about our life experiences, our struggles, and our joys:* Family life is authentic when there is time to truly experience all facets of life together.

*10) Seeking to identify and resist the systems and powers that harm people, that weaken human communities, and that destroy God's creation:* Families must seek to show both God's love and justice. This includes helping the helpless and

giving voice to the voiceless. This practice was underlined by the reading from Isaiah 61 in the temple.<sup>68</sup>

*11) Working with others to create relationships, communities, and social systems that are in accord with God's will:* Similar to the last practice, families should be a part of God's work in the world – showing redemption in the midst of brokenness, justice in the midst of injustice.

*12) Confessing our sins to one another, forgiving and restoring our relationships with one another:* Family members become mirrors to one another – seeing, reflecting and admitting the truth. A safe environment of love based on God's unconditional love harbors authenticity and truth-telling. In this manner, families are nurtured in their spiritual lives.

Though not conclusive, this thorough list begins to get at the intentional nature of the spiritual formation process. These practices engage the whole family and builds on the relationship with God and the relationships within the family.

#### *Spiritual Formation: Practice Loving God and Each Other*

The church must equip family members to continue growing intentionally in relationship with God and with each other. The practice of loving God and each other

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<sup>68</sup> See Luke 4:16-21.



was a part of the biblical mantra of nurturing the faith in family life:

*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”<sup>69</sup>*

The writer of Deuteronomy knew that the people of God would only continue to be the people of God if such love was intermingled with the daily routines and cares and relationships of life. Loving God and each other is an every-day choice. Families must practice loving God in the decisions and choices they make.

Marva Dawn offers a helpful insight: “Jesus, who is the Truth, provides the center and focus for all that our children learn in our fractured postmodern times. He is the Way to the genuine home for which everyone in our post-modern culture searches. He is the Life who gives us hope for eternity and that hope ‘does not disappoint us.’ (Romans 5:5).”<sup>70</sup> She then asked, “Will our Christian communities as a whole and individual parents and pastors be formed by, and work to form our children by, the biblical meta-narrative so that we can improvise well—and thereby draw to the triune God the world he loves and longs to save?”<sup>71</sup> Parents in their busyness and in their own needs must practice nearness with their family so that the family can be near to God together. If the parents do not equip their children, who will? The time most children (and parents, for that matter) spend in church is totally inadequate for spiritual formation. Families, if they are to have a shot at “being Christian,” will have to learn to be Christian in the crucible of discipleship that is the family. Marva Dawn was correct when she said, “In the Christian community we want to be decisively different, for we know that formation of alternative

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<sup>69</sup> Deuteronomy 6:5-7 (English Standard Version).

<sup>70</sup> Marva Dawn, *Is it a Lost Cause?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 45.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

character takes a great investment of prime time to counteract all the influences of the dominant culture.”<sup>72</sup> Additionally, as Eugene Peterson observed, “To follow Jesus implies that we enter into a way of life that is given character and shape and direction by the one who calls us. To follow Jesus means picking up rhythms and ways of doing things that are often unsaid but always derivative from Jesus.”<sup>73</sup>

A look into the rhythm of the life of Jesus is instructive. In Mark 1, Jesus launched his ministry, immediately following his baptism. He then called the first disciples and healed many. In the midst of all of the God-activity, Jesus stepped away to pray. “And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.”<sup>74</sup> His disciples marveled that he was taking time away from doing in order to be alone and pray. Families must seek to find the rhythm of life – time alone and time together, time at prayer and time at service, time as a couple and time as a family, time in structured activities and time to play, time to rest and time to be social. The rhythms that families find should allow space and grace to practice loving God and loving each other.

Spiritual formation in the family will require not only time for the practice of the classic spiritual disciplines of prayer, worship, and Bible study, but also time for the more relational disciplines including family rituals, forgiveness, laughter, serving, family devotions, and family spiritual rites of passage. The second part of the missional strategy formed missional families by guiding them to spiritual formation through core practices and family commitments.

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<sup>72</sup> Dawn, 120.

<sup>73</sup> Eugene Peterson, *The Way of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 22.

<sup>74</sup> Mark 1:35 (English Standard Version).

## Become the Church

The final part of the church's strategy for creating "missional families" based on the Lukan sending passage is to equip the family to become the domestic church and to understand its call in the world as a missional family. From before Easter, Jesus has used the home as a base for mission activity. His disciples were sent to houses. Once the household was converted, that house became the base for reaching the entire community.<sup>75</sup> Similarly today, families who have a missional identity and practice missional formation live out their missional vocation to share the story of Jesus Christ with their neighborhood and community. Matson observes, "In directing his messengers to stay in houses, the Lukan Jesus anticipates the emergence of a new 'sacred space' for the new inclusive people of God. The result of the household protocol is that the house effectively becomes the house church."<sup>76</sup> Wendy Wright claims that the family is the domestic church.<sup>77</sup> She says,

At best, families either simply claim agreement with official church doctrine or import 'churchy' rituals or prayers into their homes hoping this will impart religious meaning to their shared life. Most Christian families seem not to feel their family-ness as sacred. They fail to name their most profound moments of shared memory – birth, death, sexual intimacy, estrangement, forgiveness, gathering, the daily struggles to be with and for each other – with words associated with religion or spiritual life. Yet, in the documents that come out of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960's, the Roman Catholic tradition did explicitly name the family as 'domestic church' (a phrase first coined by St. Jerome!).... That the Christian family is understood to be an authentic, and indeed, the primary unit of church does not necessarily mean that the family mirrors in miniature the institutional church in its structure or simply that family members embrace official teaching. Nor does it mainly mean that 'religion starts at home'.... Rather to be the domestic church means that the family, in the uniqueness

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<sup>75</sup> See Roger W. Gehring, *House Church and Mission* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), for a thorough treatment of the use of the house in the ministry of Jesus, the disciples and the New Testament church as well as implications for the current house church movement.

<sup>76</sup> Matson, 48.

<sup>77</sup> Chapter 5 will trace the development of the concept of "domestic church".

of its way-of-being-in-world is an authentic community of believers....  
The ways that the family senses a call to witness to the gospel are true  
vocations and serve the whole.<sup>78</sup>

So, as the family lives together, the family is transformed together as they go to Jesus. The family is converted and becomes the witnessing church through the experience of everyday real life and the challenges brought about by living life together. As the church guides the family to be the church, families will discover their vocation in the world.

*Vocation: Called to take the love for God and each other and use it to join God's love and work in the world*

The church must equip the family to understand that its love for God and each other is not to remain inside the family unit. Instead, this love forms the basis for the missional vocation of the family. God so loved the world that he sent Jesus into the world. Jesus lived in relationships and in a place. And within that context, he helped and taught and wept and lived showing people God's love and grace and calling them to be more than they knew they could be. Families bear witness to the very heart of God –as a sending God who sent Jesus into the world, as they are sent into the world to impact a post-Christian world. This concept of the church and the family being sent has its roots in the theological term “missional.”

Families, as covenant communities and as the domestic church, encounter the Gospel and are continually being changed. They are missional, both “inwardly strong yet

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<sup>78</sup> Wendy M. Wright, *Sacred Dwelling* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 24-25.

externally focused.”<sup>79</sup> In and never apart from our culture the church must challenge families to live faithfully distinct and to be sent into the culture as they encounter God in this time and space.<sup>80</sup> The redemption and conversion of the family bears witness that God is transforming our culture through our culture. In our postmodern reality, the church should more faithfully and more urgently, with Jesus, exhort the family:

*You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*<sup>81</sup>

Families must live into the understanding that wherever God has them spending time individually and as a family, they are called to flavor and season people and relationships so that the world more fully knows God’s love. Though Jesus had at other times exhorted his followers to do good anonymously so as not to receive honor, this time Jesus asks followers to do good publicly so that God gets the honor.<sup>82</sup> Peterson and Shamy write, “Jesus repeatedly instructs us to live out what we have before the people we rub shoulders with every day....”<sup>83</sup> Hare further remarked that Jesus stresses that disciples

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<sup>79</sup> The phrase “inwardly strong and externally focused” is a mantra of churches in the PC(USA) who are seeking to become missional. Churches, and for the purposes of this paper, families, or domestic churches, are called to be deeply committed to Jesus Christ but at the same time focused on the world. God is at work in the world and families are to join God in his work there. This phrase was the theme for the 2007 Presbyterian Global Fellowship Conference. See <http://presbyterianglobalfellowship.org/pages/conference2007>.

<sup>80</sup> George R. Hunsberger, “The Newbigin Gauntlet” in *The Church Between Gospel and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 17.

<sup>81</sup> Matthew 5:13-16 (English Standard Version).

<sup>82</sup> Craig S. Keener, *Matthew: The IVP New Testament Commentary Series* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press: 1997), 110.

<sup>83</sup> Jim Peterson and Mike Shamy, *The Insider* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2003), 57.

are salt yes, and light yes, but the purpose of saltiness and brightness is for the whole world.<sup>84</sup>

From the beginning, from Abram's initial covenantal relationship with God, the call to the generations and to the family has been more than a call to individual or even family-savedness and relationship with God. The idea has been that the family is blessed to be a blessing, saved to introduce the Savior. God said to Abram,

*And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*<sup>85</sup>

God transforms people in the family unit today to be Christian families with a distinct identity. Christian families are called to be a light to our culture. Christian families engage and joyfully live in the culture but are not bound by or to the culture. God is calling the church to be a part of transforming family life, showing that redemption can even happen in the dysfunctional home. It is simply inadequate that the church offer attractive programs surrounded by “felt needs” of families – even if they are assisting in the Christian formation of families. Focus must be shifted, as Hunsberger asserted for the church of individuals, from recruiting families to pushing them outward into the world on mission to the world and with the world.<sup>86</sup> Families must understand that their mission field begins wherever they are each day – in their homes, schools, workplaces, and

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<sup>84</sup> Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, John Knox Press: 1993), 44.

<sup>85</sup> Genesis 12:2-3 (English Standard Version).

<sup>86</sup> George Hunsberger, “Sizing Up the Shape of the Church” in *The Church Between Gospel and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 345.

neighborhoods.<sup>87</sup> Dennis Guernsey writes,

Christianity, if it is going to work, must work in the most intimate of relationships: between husband and wife, between parents and children, between siblings, between believer and believer, and between believer and unbeliever. As the people of God we paint a family portrait as we demonstrate the real presence of Christ in the world through our love for one another.<sup>88</sup>

Christians loudly declare the love of God in Jesus Christ through their family life and through their interactions with those they encounter. The church must feel the burden and conviction to be in the business of changing the family, of course, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Our culture will be most surprised if something good can come out of something so long called bad and dysfunctional. Hans Kung's challenge to the church is an excellent challenge and impetus for family ministry and mission:

We are to preach metanoia [to our families]. We must entice people from the world to God. We are not to shut ourselves off from the world in a spirit of asceticism, but to live in the everyday world inspired by the radical obedience that is demanded by the love of God. The church must be reformed again and again, converted again and again, in order that it may fulfill its task.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Steve Hayner, "The Story of the Missional Church" an address given at Presbyterian Global Fellowship Conference, at Peachtree Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, Georgia on August 17, 2006.

<sup>88</sup> Dennis B. Guernsey, "Family Ministry and A Philosophy of the Family" *Direction* 19, no.1 (Spring 1990): 4.

<sup>89</sup> Hans Kung quoted in William H. Willimon, *Acts: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 104.

### **Chapter 3**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews relevant literature on the church's attempts to minister to the family, including the church's response to the needs of the family, types of ministries that have developed in response to those needs, and varied missional family descriptors. This literature provides the theoretical and methodological basis for a missional curriculum, which will guide families to make commitments to live and act as missional families.

### **Church Models of Family Ministry**

Churches have always ministered to families. Churches have employed at least four models in this ministry: therapeutic, programmatic, equipping, and missional.<sup>90</sup> Each model has contributed to congregational life; parts of these models can be seen in congregations today.

#### *The Therapeutic Model*

Therapeutic ministries aim to make families functional. The church as a social change agent acts as the prime mover in the life of families. The successful outcome of this model is making better families and, cumulatively, a better society. The therapeutic model had its roots in the 1960s: "The community mental health center movement of the 1960s in the United States provided interesting parallels and opportunities for professional collaboration between congregational leaders developing family ministries

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<sup>90</sup> These models were created and defined by the writer as the literature of family ministry was reviewed. This typology can be helpful to churches in evaluating, developing, and maturing their own family ministries.



and community social service professionals.”<sup>91</sup> Diane Garland reinforces this point concerning the therapeutic model:

Family ministry programs are often based on the premise that both church folk and nonchurch folk have the same needs--better education and preparation for family roles. If we can just give them better knowledge and skills, so the reasoning goes, we can shore up eroding family systems. Family ministry has been shaped according to the community mental health model which evolved in the 1960s and '70s in the social service professions. According to this model, the primary goal is to prevent problems through education, and when that fails, to provide services in time of crisis to limit the damage created by family problems. Many family ministry programs bear a striking resemblance to the programs of social service agencies, often with a generous sprinkling of biblical proof texts. Congregations have also invested heavily in in-house counseling services for families in crisis.<sup>92</sup>

Garland notes that the church and non-religious social services have similar methods and goals. Martin Marty uses this model as a way to bring theologically divergent parts of the church together as they admit the families' needs and the solutions that the church can bring. In introducing a handbook on ministry with families, Marty writes,

It is time, then, for people of left and right, and particularly of Christian liberal and conservative backgrounds, to admit that they need help and that they need a place of common ground. There they deal frankly with the problems of the family. There they can find resources to deal hopefully with the promises for the family. It is too late to enjoy keeping up appearances, acting as if all is well when it is not, with the family. It is also too late for anyone to wallow in despair, acting as if nothing can be done about the family, when much can be done, not least in the spheres shaped by Christian faith and hope.<sup>93</sup>

In that same book, the editor defines family ministry saying that it:

includes any services provided by a church or church agency whether by a helping professional or a nonprofessional volunteer, which aim to

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<sup>91</sup> The Family Ministry Encyclopedia, “Congregational Family Ministry and Public Family Service Programs,” <http://family.jrank.org/pages/557/Family-Ministry-Congregational-Family-Ministry-Public-Family-Service-Programs.html> (accessed October 11, 2007).

<sup>92</sup> Diana Garland, “What is Family Ministry?,” *Christian Century* 113, no.33 (November 1996): 3.

<sup>93</sup> Martin Marty, Forward of *The Church's Ministry With Families: A Practical Guide*, Diana S. Richmond Garland and Diane L. Pancoast, eds (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1990), xiv.

strengthen the relationships between family members.... It is, in fact, the ministry of the church, offered through a variety of professionals and nonprofessionals, in response to the needs of families both within and outside the church membership.”<sup>94</sup>

The tasks for family ministry of this model include:

- 1) Strengthening the relationships among ecological family members,
- 2) Providing a catalyst for the development of new family relationships and the successful navigation of family development stages; and
- 3) Advocating in behalf of ecological families and social networks in church structures, in the development and assessment of church programs, and in other structures and institutions of society.<sup>95</sup>

The therapeutic model is inadequate for the creation of Christian (and missional) identity, formation, and vocation. Its emphasis on “well-ness” is steeped in secular definitions and solutions. Though these emphases can, in fact, be helpful in making missional families, they must be coupled with a more distinctive definition of the family, Christian nurture, and understanding of family’s calling, or vocation, in the world. It is not difficult to see the legacy that this model has left the church. Many community ministries as well as counseling programs (or in recent years the development of Family Life Education, or FLE<sup>96</sup>) within congregational family ministries are shaped by the therapeutic model of family ministry.

### *The Programmatic Model*

The programmatic model aims to make families faithful church goers – the church is responsible for teaching the family members what it means to be faithful. The model assumes that the church can spiritually teach and nurture more effectively than the

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<sup>94</sup> Marty, 4.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>96</sup> See Diana R. Garland, *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 1999), 503., for a thorough description of Family Life Education.

family.<sup>97</sup> Because of their psychological and theological expertise, church professionals are perceived as having the best chance to lead children and families into the life of discipleship. The successful outcome of this model is to have a healthy, vibrant church, attracting families to attend sophisticated programs. Dennis Guernsey said of this model of ministry,

My observation is that all too often, the practitioners in the church who are responsible for family ministries tend to focus upon programs rather than process. Successful family ministry is determined by the number of programs the church has implemented in any given year. Thus, in a tangible sense, family ministry is reduced to the showing of a film series on a Sunday night. It involves organizing Sunday school classes to deal with family themes such as marriage and parenting.<sup>98</sup>

In this model, churches develop programs for each member of the family. Age and developmentally-appropriate children and student ministries value engaging and entertaining children and students. Many of these ministries bring in consultants who have worked for Disney World, Starbucks, or other entertainment industries hoping to create environments that will attract children and families.<sup>99</sup> A fundamental supposition is that the church needs to compete with other entertainment options.

Sue Miller details the Willow Creek Community Church children's ministry, Promiseland. This program – the envy of many churches – is paradigmatic of the

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<sup>97</sup> Ivy Beckwith, *Postmodern Children's Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 104. Beckwith asks some interesting questions about whether program-driven ministries are inhibitors to dealing with the primary spiritual needs of [postmodern] children. He invites churches to build community and stress spiritual formation and children's role in serving in the world.

<sup>98</sup> Guernsey, 7.

<sup>99</sup> In 2005, the thesis author attended a conference sponsored by Group Publications that engaged a high-level Disney imagineer to interact with large church children's ministries. This was an incredibly energizing experience. Since God is the ultimate imagineer, there must be a place for creativity in ministry. To create integrity in the church when engaging creativity in programs, the church must make sure to connect these programs to long-term discipleship goals. Programs must be a means to the end of equipping families and changing lives.

programmatic model, and many other church have tried to emulate it. Miller enumerated the core ministry values:

- 1) Promiseland is child-targeted.
- 2) Promiseland is safe.
- 3) Promiseland teaching is relevant and application-oriented.
- 4) Promiseland will teach the Bible creatively.<sup>100</sup>

In promoting their Promiseland curriculum, Willow Creek advertises that Promiseland “builds community (with other adult volunteers), is fun, nurtures faith and is flexible.”<sup>101</sup> Noticeably absent from her book and the curriculum is any effort on the part of Willow Creek to provide ministry to parents so that they can partner with the sophisticated, child-entertaining weekly program. In the forward of the book, George Barna mentioned the parents, saying: “Parents expect the church to inculcate spiritual thinking, behavior, experiences, and knowledge in the hearts and minds of their children because after all, the church is the ‘expert’ in that arena.”<sup>102</sup> Barna did not choose to remind parents of their God-given responsibility as primary faith shapers.

Willow Creek Community Church, Saddleback Community Church, and Northpoint Community Church are all churches that have had major influence on church programming and are good examples of this model of ministry to families. This model has made many contributions to congregational life, providing creative, exciting, and dynamic programs and environments in which families want to participate. These programs can draw outsiders into a faith community. In many cases, Sunday school and

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<sup>100</sup> Sue Miller with David Staal, *Making Your Children's Ministry The Best Hour of Every Kid's Week* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 184-5.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>102</sup> Miller, 12.

other programs of children and student ministries had not addressed the unique needs and learning styles of children. The programmatic model provides a corrective frame for ministry, which meets children and students where they are. The programmatic model takes seriously the desire to do relevant ministry -- always ready to “become all thing to all people”<sup>103</sup> just as the Apostle Paul contextually and strategically built his ministry paradigms.

These programs, though, must do more than entertain. Programs attracting children, students, adults, and families need to be the means to an end. Guernsey notes,

Though often programmatic out of necessity, family ministry according to my definition represents a philosophy of ministry as well as a strategy for achieving that ministry. The nurture and care of the people of God one to another and to others are the legitimate goals of family ministry, whatever forms the structures take.<sup>104</sup>

Programs must continue to be a part of family ministry but should be one intentional component of a larger philosophy of family ministry.

### *The Equipping Model*

A church employing the equipping model aims to make family members disciples of Jesus Christ. The church is an equipping partner with the parents in the spiritual formation of the family. The successful outcome of this model is to have a family of

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<sup>103</sup>Paul wrote, “For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have *become all things to all people*, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings. Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it (1 Corinthians 9:19-24). Paul’s strategy to do ministry contextually is instructive. Congregational ministry should be contextual yet never compromising our primary goal of making and equipping disciples of Jesus Christ.

<sup>104</sup> Guernsey, 8.

faithful disciples whose lives have been transformed by a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Dennis Rainey writes,

The first step in making your church a marriage-and-family equipping center is to realign your vision and philosophy of ministry. We must be intentional about helping marriages and families become distinctively Christian. The church exists for many reasons. Near the top of the list is “equipping the saints for the work of service” (Eph. 4:12). That “service” occurs most naturally, frequently, and powerfully in the around-the-clock relationships of the family – first, husband –wife and then, parent –child. Obviously the church has been commissioned to do much more, but it must not fail to address family needs.<sup>105</sup>

This model acknowledges the need for churches to have programs and to work in partnership with parents to shape families and children. As Pamela Erwin notes,

Churches may spend thousands of dollars on programs for children and youth, and they may hire children’s pastors and youth pastors, but although these programs are wise investments, parents have the greatest influence on a young person’s faith development....This means that part of the evangelism and discipleship of children and youth is the strengthening of parents, who in turn strengthen the entire family.<sup>106</sup>

St. Catherine of Siena’s Catholic Church in Austin, Texas’s website showcases the equipping model of ministry to families:

Family ministry at St. Catherine’s takes many forms:

- Support groups for parents new to the role of parenting,
- Marriage enrichment opportunities
- Workshops designed to increase the many ways we can truly live out the call “to love one another as I have loved you.”
- Explore the many opportunities to strengthen our commitment to our baptismal promises!

In the words of Pope John Paul II,

*The family, the great workshop of love, is the first school, indeed, a lasting school where people are not taught to love with barren ideas, but with the*

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<sup>105</sup> Dennis Rainey, *Ministering to Twenty-First Century Families* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 60.

<sup>106</sup> Pamela J. Erwin, *The Family Powered Church* (Loveland, Colorado: Group Publishers, 2000), 68.

*incisive power of experience. May every family truly rediscover its own vocation to love!*<sup>107</sup>

George Barna writes about the spiritual development of children and families,

... the spiritual development of children is first and foremost the responsibility of the parents and a church is best poised to assist rather than lead in that process. Drawing on biblical principles and precedent, these churches see themselves as serving families by providing emotional, spiritual and material support to parents as they invest in the faith of their children.<sup>108</sup>

The equipping model provides another needed corrective to the previous models.

Parents are correctly identified as the first and the primary faith-shapers of children.

Parents are stewards of their children and should take very seriously this role. The church must guide the parents into this role. Many programmatic models of ministry attempt to equip parents as a part of their program through interactive activities (between parents and children) either at church or at home. One challenge of this program is ministering to children who do not have Christian parents or cooperative parents.

Children often come to faith through programs at the church and parents are not always a part of the decision. It is not unusual for children to come to faith and then bring their parents to church (and perhaps to a relationship with Jesus Christ). Other times, Christian parents simply give their own responsibility to the church. Churches can inadvertently encourage this behavior. Churches employing the equipping model must acknowledge these and other challenges to have a comprehensive ministry to families at different spiritual stages.

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<sup>107</sup> See St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church's website: [http://www.stcatherineaustin.org/custom\\_page.cfm?category=4&page=4&active=4](http://www.stcatherineaustin.org/custom_page.cfm?category=4&page=4&active=4) [accessed October 15, 2007].

<sup>108</sup> George Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 2003), 98.

The legacy of the equipping model is strong. Programs like MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers), small groups, and even the therapeutic-based FLE (Family Life Education) are all examples of programs that meet the needs of the family and equip family members to live as disciples. If creating missional families is the goal of a church's family ministry, the equipping model stops short of its ultimate purpose. The equipping model stresses the relationship that family members have with each other and with God, rather than the family's relationship with the world around it.

### *The Missional Model*

A church employing the missional model aims to make missional families. The church is a launching pad, sending the family into the world to partner with what God is doing. The successful outcome of this model is to have families transforming culture in the name of Jesus Christ. To that end, families will have a missional identity, will be engaged in missional formation, and will have a missional vocation.

The "missional" movement has served to challenge the way Christians, and in this case, Christian families, interact with culture and live lives as Christians rather than limiting faith falsely to a privatized, compartmentalized spirituality. George Hunsberger traces the development of the definition of church:

In the *Reformation heritage*,  
the church is a place where certain things happen,

In the *Contemporary variation*,  
the church is a vendor of religious goods and services; and



In the *Missionary [or Missional] vision*, the church is a body of people sent on a mission.<sup>109</sup>

This missional definition also applies to individuals and can be instructive for Christian families as well. Frost and Hirsch define the missional church as being “incarnational rather than attractional.” The missional church, as defined by Frost and Hirsch, also breaks down the wall between the sacred and the secular.<sup>110</sup> These definitional parameters match well with families who are in the world as salt and light, going into the real world to introduce people to God’s love in Jesus Christ. Because of the proximity of families to their communities and because of the volume of families scattered all over the world, there is a powerful motivation for the church to equip families as evangelists and followers of Jesus. In our postmodern culture, families naturally play the role of missionaries to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As his church moved towards becoming a “family friendly church” that typifies the missional model of church ministry towards families, Ben Freudenberg articulates the philosophy of this model:

We’ve come to believe that the home is the primary agency for faith formation. While there are many church ‘agencies’ God uses to nurture the faith, it is our conviction that the primary agency is the Christian home. Every day of our lives begins and ends at home, no matter how our home is configured. The primary place we experience confession and forgiveness is in the Christian home. It’s in the home that positive values are shaped. It’s in the Christian home where joys are shared and multiplied and sorrows are divided. It’s in the Christian home where prayer provides unusual and dramatic bonding with each other and with our Lord. The church recognizes the powerful influence the home has in shaping faith and life.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> George R. Hunsberger, “Sizing Up the Shape of the Church” in *The Church Between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*, eds. George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 338.

<sup>110</sup> Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2003), 12.

<sup>111</sup> Ben Freudenberg with Rick Lawrence, *The Family Friendly Church* (Loveland, Colorado: Vital Ministries of Group Publishing, Inc., 1998), 108. See also diagram on page 109.

Freudensburg restates the biblical theology of home as the place for spiritual formation and the place where families learn to love God and to love others. He goes on to describe the role of the church in equipping its families.

Therefore, the people of God gather often as a congregation for encouragement, support, and training – only to return to their homes to be energized and sent into the world as witnesses to Jesus. The church evaluates its effectiveness not only by those coming to church but by those it sends equipped to their homes, communities and the world.<sup>112</sup>

The church encourages, supports and trains and then, partnering with God, sends out missional families into the world – resulting in transforming the world through the everyday places that the families go.

The congregation is a partner with homes, providing all it can to nurture and equip them at church for their ministry in the work-place, at school, in the marketplace, in neighborhoods, and in places of recreation. We're called and sent to transform communities with God's love and grace through Jesus Christ.<sup>113</sup>

If the church is serious about these claims for the role of the family as it relates to the church and if it is serious about the role of the family in the world, it will make major shifts in its curriculum and emphasis in programs. Freudensburg applies his strategy to three arenas in the church:<sup>114</sup> 1) The first arena is the age-specific arena. Programs in this arena include VBS, youth group, Sunday school, camps, and mission trips. Age-specific arena programs partner with other church programs to teach faith. These programs also serve a vital ministry to children who do not have Christian parents. 2) The second arena is the intergenerational arena. Programs in this arena include families with parents and children. These events can be recreational or more direct Bible studies or worship. In these programs, parents practice nurturing their children's and potentially

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<sup>112</sup> Freudenburg, 108.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 111-113.

other children's faith. 3) The last arena is the home arena. The church's role in this arena is providing resources in order to equip parents for faith nurture at home. All three arenas are critical to equipping families to live as Christians in the world.

In this model, the church will acknowledge the family as the expert for guiding and shaping programs that grow missional families. The church must learn from families the challenges and opportunities they face in day-to-day living. Guernsey writes:

Part of the creativity required in family ministry is to take the opportunity to influence the way the people of God and the family of God spend the hours of the week they are not at church. That is, family ministry is particularly relevant to the rest of the week, between Sundays.<sup>115</sup>

The missional model of ministry acknowledges the unique way that every family will be called to live out its missional identity, formation, and vocation. Each family's context, make-up, experiences, gifts and passions will build particular ways to faithfully live as missional families. If the church is successful in doing what Guernsey writes, it will provide opportunities for families to discover and grow in missional living, as defined by the families themselves.

The focus of the missional ministry of the church is on what happens outside the church rather than what is happening inside the walls of the church. Victor Lee and Jerry Pipes offer practical advice for how a family might be equipped to live its faith in their

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<sup>115</sup> Guernsey, 8.

everyday world:

Be there for your neighbors, friends, and acquaintances. Invest some time. Hang over the fence talking a few minutes longer than you normally might. Stop, check in, and look and listen for how Jesus may use you to bless and ultimately to share Christ with those in your communities.<sup>116</sup>

Given the busy schedules of families, states Penny Becker, what the church offers must be not only relevant but it must be meaningful:

What church members find most compelling, what causes them to make the time for church in the context of a busy life, is the sense that they get something there that they get no where else, something worth making a commitment to.<sup>117</sup>

### **Missional Family Descriptors**

There are several descriptors for the family that are appropriate within the missional model. This section will describe and define some of these descriptors.

#### *Family as “Christian Vocation”*

In describing family as “Christian vocation,” one must start with the historical ecclesial view of the call. Historically, one had a vocational call (to ordained ministry) or one did not have a Christian calling. Post-reformation, vocation has broadened. A vocation or calling can include a general understanding of a person as a child of God and follower of Jesus Christ. A vocation might describe one’s understanding of a profession as a place to live as a disciple.<sup>118</sup> One also might describe one’s family life as Christian

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<sup>116</sup> Victor Lee and Jerry Pipes, *Family to Family: Families Making A Difference* (Alpharetta, Georgia: North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1999), 72.

<sup>117</sup> Penny Edgell Becker, “It’s Not Just A Matter of Time: How the Time Squeeze Affects Congregational Participation,” *Family Ministry: Empowering Through Faith* 15, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 25.

<sup>118</sup> See [hischurchatwork.org](http://hischurchatwork.org) for a ministry that focuses on equipping churches to equip disciples to view their work as their vocation, where they live out their calling as disciples of Jesus Christ.

vocation. When living as a husband or a wife, a parent or a child, in a family, one is living out a calling that God has given him/her. Florence Caffrey Bourg says,

Thoughtful Christians are realizing and voicing the fact that ordinary family life need not be distraction from God – in fact, it can be the setting where God’s presence is made real and concrete. They are recognizing the untapped potential of family life as an outlet for their Christian vocation.<sup>119</sup>

Many have undervalued the sacrament of the everyday “life together” of family life.

Changing diapers, driving carpools, teaching children, even forgiving and shaping and serving as family can seem secondary to other vocations where a paycheck gives value.

Earnest Boyer describes this difficulty:

All of these never-ending, everyday tasks can seem far from what is most important in life and that probably more than anything else makes them hard to endure. It is not easy to see how each of these acts, so fleeting in itself, adds up to much more collectively. How hard it is to give yourself to what seems to have so little significance.”<sup>120</sup>

Bourg reinforces the need for families to understand their life together as purposeful and as vocation in this model:

We [Families] need a sense of mission. We need to believe that what we are doing is important, in order to remain enthusiastic about the hard work of maintaining relationships and running a household, let alone be motivated to reach out to others beyond our own household. We must be able to articulate our family’s goals in order to budget our finite resources of money and time, or teach and discipline children.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Florence Caffrey Bourg, *Where Two Or Three Are Gathered* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 6.

<sup>120</sup> Earnest Boyer, Jr, *Family Life as Spiritual Discipline* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 68.

<sup>121</sup> Bourg, 41.

### *Family as “Domestic Church”*

“Domestic church” is a phrase that defines the family as a “little church” or a “house church.” This phrase can be traced back to the New Testament *haustefel* and household churches and has through the history of the church been used to describe the family. In recent years, it has been used widely in Catholic writings. The 1994 Bishop’s Pastoral, “Follow the Way of Love” said, “The point of teaching is simple, yet profound. As Christian families, you not only belong to the Church, but your daily life is a true expression of the Church.”<sup>122</sup> Bourg details the historical development of “domestic church” with quotations from church leaders and theologians:

Chrysostom wrote: Let the house be a Church, for where the two are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Augustine wrote: Take my place in your families. Everyone who is a head of a house must exercise the Episcopal office and see to the faith of his people.

Calvin wrote: What a wonderful thing to put on record, that the name “church” is applied to a single family, and yet it is fitting that all the families of believers should be organized in such a way as to be so many little churches.

Protestant Horace Bushnell, a 19th century pastor wrote: “The child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise.” Bushnell considered Christian families as little churches and thought that family, not the larger institutional church, was the most effective medium of contact with God. He said, “Religion never thoroughly penetrates life until it becomes domestic.”<sup>123</sup>

In the *Family Handbook*, Anderson *et al.* trace the teaching of “domestic church” in *Familiaris Consortio* and *A Family Perspective in Church in Society*. The four tasks of the “domestic church” are: 1) to form a community of persons, 2) to serve life

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<sup>122</sup>Bourg, 1.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

generously, 3) to participate in the development of society, and 4) to share in the mission of the church.<sup>124</sup> The first task is related to missional identity. The second task is related to missional family formation. The third and fourth tasks are related to the missional family mission. Catholic papal writings describing the domestic church also prescribe missional identity, formation and mission:

*Identity:* Lumen Gentium #11 says,  
In what might be regarded as the domestic Church, the parents, by word and example, are the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children.

*Formation:* John Paul II says,  
Christian family, understood as domestic church, as an indispensable instrument in God's plan for the human race. "Guard, reveal and communicate love." Love protected and shared within the family, and with those it encounters, is none other than God's own love.

*Vocation:* Evangelii Nuntiandii #71 says,  
The family has well deserved the beautiful name of 'domestic church'... The family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates.

*Vocation::* Familiaris Consortio #48 says,  
Insofar as it is a "small-scale Church", the Christian family is called upon, like the "large-Scale Church," to be a sign of unity for the world and in this way to exercise its prophetic role by bearing witness to the Kingdom and peace of Christ, towards which the whole world is journeying.<sup>125</sup>

The Catholic church has written most profoundly on the "domestic church." As identified in the above quotations, these writings support growing a missional identity, formation, and vocation in the family, or domestic church. Catholic writings firmly establish the parental role in family life and family faith formation. They also fully embrace the role of the family to witness to God's love and his plan for the world.

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<sup>124</sup> Herbert Anderson, Don S. Browning, Ian S. Evison, and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, eds., *The Family Handbook* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1998), 24-25.

<sup>125</sup> Bourg, 42-45.

### *Family as “Crucible of Faith Development”*

Diana Garland identifies “family life as a crucible for individuals to learn faith, both as children and adults. Family experiences test, shape, and deepen our faith.”<sup>126</sup>

Garland elaborates that in the family crucible, personal beliefs were shaped, trust and mistrust were taught, personal faith was lived, and faith crises were sometimes caused.<sup>127</sup>

Marjorie Thompson uses the phrase “forming center” to express the same idea.

She says,

Children learn where they live. They absorb knowledge of the world by what they experience and observe.... [T]he home environment is a child’s first classroom for learning about others and about the world. Relationships with parents and siblings are primary and critical. Children quite unconsciously reflect their parents’ feelings, values, beliefs, and living patterns – absorbing them with uncanny rapidity.... Our childhood experience of intimate relationships within the family circle has an enormous impact later in life, not only on our capacity for intimacy with others but also with God.<sup>128</sup>

In family life, family members have the opportunity to practice their love of God and others. A “crucible” correctly indicates a potentially painful family environment. Many families are not nurturing in faith or in relationships. As already discussed, Christians have difficulty living their faith to the people that are closest to them. In this deeply personal, and authentic, everyday environment, faith can be refined and developed into all that God intends.

### **Creating an Effective Missional Curriculum**

Because a (mostly adult) curriculum was a part of the scope of the pilot project which is the focus of this dissertation, it is important to consider the role of curriculum

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<sup>126</sup> Garland, *Sacred Stories of Ordinary Families*, 92.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 93-108.

<sup>128</sup> Marjorie Thompson, *Family: The Forming Center* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1996), 22-23.



within Christian education. This section will also trace methodologies used to build effective adult curriculum.

### *Christian Education in the Church*

As curriculum is developed with specific learning principles and outcomes (which when effectively implemented will generate changed behaviors and new commitments), it may be helpful to look at the role of Christian education in the church as it relates to families. John Leith identified four tasks of Christian education:

- 1) Handing on of the Bible as the language and the story of faith. Teaching about the Bible is secondary to teaching the Bible.
- 2) Teaching the theology of the church – the church’s message as it has been put together in rational, coherent statements.
- 3) Helping people interpret the world in the light of Christian faith.
- 4) Instructing in household duties. The Christian life is lived amid the ordinary experience of life in the family and in the world.<sup>129</sup>

It is instructive to note the wholistic impact Christian education should have on the life of a believer. These four tasks will lead to beliefs about God but will also connect to the everyday life of Christians, calling them to make commitments and changing their attitude and behavior. Christian education should lead Christians to grow in their faith and then apply their faith, making commitments to follow Jesus Christ in all arenas of their life.

John Westerhoff lifts up the three-fold goal of one congregation taking seriously the educational, equipping task. Christian education:

- 1) sustains and transmits the Christian faith tradition;
- 2) nurtures the expansion of faith and the spiritual lives of persons;

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<sup>129</sup> John Leith, *From Generation to Generation* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 124-131.

- 3) and equips and motivates the church and its members to fulfill their Christian vocation in the world.<sup>130</sup>

These goals are instructive when considering the implementation of a missional model of ministry in a church, which impacts the identity, the formation (or practice), and the vocation of the family.

Rick Osmer writes that “teachers in church should be clear about one thing: the basic purpose of their teaching is to create a context in which faith can be awakened, supported, and challenged. Their teaching is for faith.”<sup>131</sup> Osmer identified four aspects of faith that should guide teachers who teach for faith. These four aspects of faith are:

- 1) *beliefs* about God that serve as the basis of our trust;
- 2) an ongoing, personal *relationship* with God that brings us into a relationship with other persons of faith;
- 3) a *commitment* to God as trustworthy that shapes the way we invest our time and energy; and
- 4) an awareness of the *mystery* that surrounds God and places limits on our understanding and control of God.<sup>132</sup>

A curriculum should evidence a clear understanding of its role within a larger Christian education ministry and should be used to teach faith. In many cases, a curriculum will be used to enable Christians to make commitments in their life of faith, but will build on beliefs, a relationship with God and the mystery of God.

### *Experience as Education*

The shared experience of a group of people can be a major component in an effective curriculum. The value of experience as education is an important starting

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<sup>130</sup> John H. Westerhoff II, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (New York: The Seabury Press, Inc, HarperCollins, 1976), 95.

<sup>131</sup> Richard Robert Osmer, *Teaching For Faith* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 15.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

principle. In his classic work *Experience and Education*, John Dewey wrote, “The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are equally educative.”<sup>133</sup> An experience, like a curriculum facilitated by an educator, must be carefully crafted to educate. Dewey continued,

The quality of an experience has two aspects. There is an immediate aspect of agreeableness or disagreeableness, and there is its influence upon later experiences. The first is obvious and easy to judge. The effect of an experience is not borne on its face. It sets a problem to the educator. It is his business to arrange for the kind of experiences, which, while they do not repel the student, but rather engage his activities are, nevertheless, more than immediately enjoyable since they promote having desirable future experiences.... Hence the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences.<sup>134</sup>

Assuming experiences indeed lead to learning, some attention must be given to the learning process. Kolb introduces four kinds of abilities that are necessary in order to learn from experience:<sup>135</sup>

- 1) an openness and willingness to involve oneself in new experiences (CE: concrete experiences);
- 2) observational and reflective skills so these new experiences can be viewed from a variety of perspectives (RO: reflective observation);
- 3) analytical abilities so integrative ideas and concepts can be created from their observations (AC: abstract conceptualizations); and
- 4) decision-making and problem-solving skills so these new ideas and concepts can be used in actual practice(AE: active experimentation)

These four abilities are instructive in planning the kinds of activities used in a missional curriculum since people will have varying skill in and preference for each ability. Kolb also introduced these as a cycle of learning that allowed for experiences to build on one

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<sup>133</sup> John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier Books, 1938), 25.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>135</sup> Alice Y. Kolb and David A. Kolb, “The Kolb Learning Style Inventory—Version 3.1: 2005 Technical Specifications,” Experience Based Learning Systems, Inc., [www.learningfromexperience.com/images/uploads/Tech\\_spec\\_LSI.pdf](http://www.learningfromexperience.com/images/uploads/Tech_spec_LSI.pdf) (accessed October 15, 2007).

another. The LSI (Learning Style Inventory) created by Kolb identifies preference but should not be used to label students. Kolb writes:

When it is used in the simple, straightforward, and open way intended, the LSI usually provides a valuable self-examination and discussion that recognizes the uniqueness, complexity, and variability in individual approaches to learning. The danger lies in the reification of learning styles into fixed traits, such that learning styles become stereotypes used to pigeonhole individuals and their behavior.

Instead, the LSI should be used to validate the need for variety of teaching methods and to define and gauge the learning process.

The experiences leading to education within a curriculum must build upon each other and when effectively implemented will lead to faith and increased commitment to Jesus Christ. Transformation of thoughts, actions and, in the case of a missional family curriculum, family life is the desired outcome for participants. Mezirow's theory of transformational learning, as Merriam and Caffarella explain, "is about change – dramatic, fundamental change in the way we see ourselves and the world in which we live. This kind of learning is more than merely adding to what we already know."<sup>136</sup> "Transformational learning shapes people; they are different afterward, in ways they and others can recognize."<sup>137</sup> Mezirow's theory describes a process including a disorienting dilemma, self-examination, a critical assessment of assumptions, recognizing that others have gone through a similar process, exploring options for a plan of action and finally, reintegration.<sup>138</sup> Mezirow affirms that educators who use transformational leadership, "may help others, and perhaps ourselves, move toward a fuller and more dependable

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<sup>136</sup> Sharan B. Merriam and Rosemary S. Caffarella, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999), 318.

<sup>137</sup> M.C. Clark, "Transformational Learning" in *An Update on Adult Learning Theory: New Direction for Adult and Continuing Education*, ed. S.B. Merriam (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993), 47.

<sup>138</sup> Merriam and Caffarella, 319.

understanding of the meaning of our mutual experience.”<sup>139</sup> John Westerhoff describes experience as a part of faith and transformation:

Experience is foundational to faith. A person first learns Christ not as a theological affirmation but as an affective experience. For children and for adults, it is not so much the words we hear spoken that matter most, but the experiences we have which are connected with those words. Experienced faith, therefore, results from our interaction with other faithing selves. And thus the question for a parent to ask is this: What is it to be Christian with my child? To seriously address that question is to discover what sort of environments, experiences, and interactions are necessary for our own and another's life of faith. To live with others in Christian ways, to put our words into deeds and our deeds into words, to share life with another, to be open to influence as well as to influence, and to interact with other faithing selves in a community of Christian faith is to provide the necessary environment for experienced faith.<sup>140</sup>

### *Learning in Community*

Learning for faith is effective in community. There is power in individuals coming together with their own sets of experience, learning and personalities. There is power in accountability for learning and application of learning. Jane Vella describes a type of learning that incorporates the experience of the learner, the desire for practical achievements (which would include commitments and new practices), and the ability to measure its effectiveness. This learning is called “Dialogue Education.”

Dialogue Education provides a safe, structured, and accountable framework for designing and facilitating learning events. It switches the focus from what the instructor says about a topic to what the participants do with the content to demonstrate their learning. It takes advantage of the fact that adult learners are professionals and decision makers in their

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<sup>139</sup> About.com, “Transformational Learning and Jack Mezirow,” <http://adulted.about.com/cs/learningtheory/a/mezirow.htm> (accessed March 24, 2008).

<sup>140</sup> In John H. Westerhoff II, 92., the author states that there are four faith stages: Experienced Faith, Affiliative Faith, Searching Faith, and Owned Faith. Though Westerhoff believes that mature or “expanded” faith is owned faith, the role of each of the stages is critical and remains a critical part of faith development.

learning process while providing enough rigor in the design so that everyone can clearly evaluate what they have learned.<sup>141</sup>

Dialogue Education is described in the chart from Vella's website.<sup>142</sup>

**Figure 3-1**  
**How Dialogue Education is Different**

	<b>Traditional Training</b>	<b>Dialogue Education</b>	<b>Non-Formal Education</b>
<b>Typical Methods Used</b>	<b>Lectures</b> , Power Point <b>presentations</b> , sometimes questions and answers afterwards.	<b>Learning tasks</b> where participants draw from their own experience, engage with new content, <b>apply it</b> and <b>consider its application</b> to their context.	<b>Participatory methods</b> involving simulations, games, group work, energizers, discussions.
<b>Monologue vs. Dialogue</b>	<b>Monologue</b> (uni-directional sharing of information via lecture), sometimes Q&A afterwards	<b>Dialogue amongst participants and with teacher</b> throughout workshop.	<b>Dialogue between participants.</b>
<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Accountability to Teacher</b>	<b>Mutual accountability</b> between teacher and participants and between participants	<b>Accountability to participants needs</b>
<b>Who's Knowledge Counts</b>	<b>Teacher's knowledge</b>	<b>Everyone's knowledge</b>	<b>Learners' knowledge</b>
<b>Deductive vs. Inductive Knowledge</b>	Favors <b>deductive knowledge</b>	Supports both <b>deductive/inductive knowledge</b>	Favors <b>inductive knowledge</b>
<b>Content vs. Process</b>	Focus on <b>delivering content</b>	<b>Content through process</b>	Focus on <b>process</b>
<b>Learning Styles</b>	<b>Primarily auditory</b> , some visual (PowerPoint)	<b>Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic</b>	<b>Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic</b>
<b>Learning Domains</b>	Strong for teaching in <b>cognitive learning</b> domain	Strong for <b>cognitive, affective, and psychomotor</b> learning domains	Better at teaching in <b>affective and psychomotor domains</b>
<b>Types of</b>	<b>Clear teaching objectives</b>	<b>Clear achievement-based objectives (ABOs)</b>	<b>Clear learning objectives</b>

<sup>141</sup> Jane Vella, "How Global Education is Different," Global Learning Partners, <http://www.globalelearning.com/compare.htm> (accessed October 13, 2007).

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. All of these categories are addressed in the missional family experience.

<b>Objectives</b>			
<b>Learner's Experience</b>	<b>Unless dynamic speaker</b> , it can be experienced as <b>boring, but rigorous</b>	<b>Engaging AND rigorous</b>	<b>Fun</b> , but sometimes <b>lacks clarity</b> on what has been learned.
<b>Evaluation Methods</b>	Evaluation in academic settings is done through <b>testing</b> (but often not possible in many adult learning settings). Feedback on presentations.	<b>Evaluation embedded in achievement of ABOs</b> observed during workshops. Quality of participation as judged by participants and facilitator. <b>Tracking of transfer and impact.</b>	<b>Evaluation</b> through <b>impressions of learners' experience</b> , sometimes through <b>demonstration skills.</b>
<b>Strengths / Weaknesses</b>	<b>Content rich.</b> Considered more academic, rigorous, and professional. <b>Requires little preparation / but privileges auditory learners</b> and leads to <b>low sense of ownership and learning.</b>	Can cover <b>a lot of content in a short time and at a deeper level through praxis.</b> <b>High ownership of learning process by participants.</b> Takes time to prepare well.	Process is <b>very participatory</b> and <b>engaging.</b> <b>High sense of ownership</b> of process. <b>Ambiguous results.</b> Sometimes perception of "sharing of ignorance" amongst participants.

### *Types of Learning Groups*

In a curriculum targeting families, there are at least three types of groups that could be engaged in a “dialogue education” learning process : the adults only group, the adults and children group, and the individual families operating as a group (with or without children).

#### **Adults-only**

In evaluating adult learning groups, many learning theorists have noted the uniqueness of the adult learner. Malcolm Knowles introduced the concept of andragogy (the art and science of helping adults learn). Merriam and Caffarella describe

andragogy's five assumptions:

- 1) As a person matures, his or her self concept moves from that of a dependent personality toward a self-directing personality.
- 2) An adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experience, which is a resource for learning.
- 3) The readiness of an adult to learn is closely related to the development tasks of his or her social role.
- 4) There is a change in time perspective as people mature – from future application of knowledge to immediacy of application. Thus an adult is more problem centered than subject centered in learning (Knowles, 1980, pp.44-45).
- 5) Adults are motivated to learn by internal factors rather than external ones (Knowles and Associates, 1984, pp.9-12).<sup>143</sup>

The uniqueness of the adult learner creates opportunities to motivate the adult learner in a teaching environment. Wlodkowski writes,

Adults by social definition, individual need, and institutional expectation are responsible people who seek to enhance their identity through learning that further develops their competence. For adult learners to experience intrinsic motivation, they need to connect who they are with what they learn.<sup>144</sup>

He introduced four categories of ways to motivate the adult learner that should be employed in an effective missional curriculum:

\* *Inclusion*: include the adult learner in the learning process. Inclusion creates a feeling of connection amongst adults as well as a climate of respect

\* *Attitude*: creating a positive disposition towards learning. Attitude builds positive attitudes toward the subject, develops positive self-concepts for learning, establishes expectancy for success, and creates relevant learning experiences.

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<sup>143</sup> Merriam and Caffarella, 272. The authors place andragogy in the humanist orientation to learning. The other orientations include Behaviorist, Cognitivist, Humanist, Social Learning, and Constructivist. For a full treatment of these orientations, see pages 248-266.

<sup>144</sup> Raymond J. Wlodkowski, *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn: A Comprehensive Guide For Teaching All Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999), 12.



\* *Meaning*: making the learning both interesting and significant. Meaning maintains learners' attention, invites and evokes learners' interest and develops engagement and challenge.

\* *Competence*: making learners effective at what they value. Competence is engendered with assessment and communication.<sup>145</sup>

As a teacher/facilitator effectively engages an adult group, Tennant recommends the following strategies:

\* teachers can link their explanations and illustrations to the prior experience of learners;

\* teachers can attempt to link learning activities to learner's current experiences at work, home, or in the community;

\* teachers can create experiences from which learning will flow; and

\* the meanings that learners attach to their experiences may be subjected to critical scrutiny.<sup>146</sup>

### Intergenerational Groups

Another group that could be employed in a curriculum includes adults and children, or an intergenerational group. As has already been discussed, intergenerational strategies are also helpful in learning and growing in the life of faith. Olson and Leonard lift up family clusters as an effective form of community learning. Clusters are:

gatherings of four to six complete household units of many kinds for common learning, celebrating, recreating, and sharing. A cluster might include a single-parent family, an older couple, a single young adult, and two or three two-parent families. The genius of this approach is that it takes the family system as the learner. In family clusters, whole families are present, growing in their understanding of their agenda, their rules, their goals, their conflicts. In family clusters whole families learn communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution that equip them to work on their family agenda with greater competence and success.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Wlodkowski, 294-297.

<sup>146</sup> Mark Tennant, "The Psychology of Adult Teaching and Learning" in *Adult Education: Evolution and Achievements in a Developing Field of Study*, eds J. M. Peters, P. Jarvis, and Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991), 196-197.

<sup>147</sup> Richard P. Olson and Joe H. Leonard, Jr., *A New Day For Family Ministry* (Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 1996), 86.

When engaging intergenerational groups, it is also important to consider the developmental stages of the children.<sup>148</sup>

### Individual Family Groups

The final potential group to engage in a curriculum targeting families is the individual family group. Family systems theory is at work as the family is engaged in the learning process and guided towards commitment and transformation. David Cox writes,

Family systems thinking focuses on the family as a unit rather than on individual members. Family systems thinking represents a leap forward from the old individual model of therapy, where the focus was on the symptomatic member of the family, to how people function in relational systems. A fundamental premise is that each person in a family plays a role in the functioning of the other persons in the family, the system.<sup>149</sup>

As the family system is engaged by a curriculum, one learning theory that could be applied is the cognitive apprenticeship learning theory, which would provide opportunities for the families to approximate situations, practice new behaviors and reflect on a model's performance.<sup>150</sup> The stages of the cognitive apprenticeship include:

- 1) teacher considers expert-like strategies involved in a task
- 2) teacher designs scaffolds that encourage students to apply the strategies.
- 3) The activities should be situated or geared toward a relevant outcome
- 4) Teacher models strategies and coaches students to apply them.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> See Sara Covin Juengst, *Sharing Faith with Children* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), for a good review of the ways that children think and grow in their faith as well as their spiritual needs particularly as these developmental characteristics might impact curriculum and activities for learning.

<sup>149</sup> David W. Cox, "The Edwin Friedman Model of Family Systems Thinking: Lessons for Organizational Leaders," Academic Leadership, [www.academicleadership.org/uploads/1/EdwinFriedmanModelofFamSysThinking\\_1.pdf](http://www.academicleadership.org/uploads/1/EdwinFriedmanModelofFamSysThinking_1.pdf) (accessed September 12, 2007).

<sup>150</sup> See Merriam and Caffarella, 243., for a full description of cognitive apprenticeships.

<sup>151</sup> Kevin Oliver, "Situated Cognition and Cognitive Apprenticeships," Virginia Tech University, <http://www.edtech.vt.edu/edtech/id/models/cog.html> (accessed October 29, 2007), 10.

## *Group Dynamics*

In each of these three potential groups, group dynamics should be considered.

Literature suggests the principal that group dynamics in general, and the development of community in particular, have an impact on learning in group settings.<sup>152</sup>

Tennant writes about adult group dynamics,

...it is through group learning that many of the precepts in adult education can be realised. Groups are said to promote self-understanding through shared support and mutual feedback. They generate the experiential base for learning; they encourage interaction, self-determination and trust.<sup>153</sup>

Joseph Armstrong, acknowledging that all small groups are not the same due to the context and participants, recommends some strategies for effective adult small groups:

- 1) Establish ground rules.
- 2) Beware of the leader's halo effect
- 3) Use social-microcosm effect: focus group on present experience
- 4) Focus on process
- 5) Encourage a conflict of ideas
- 6) Challenge ideas
- 7) Use silence.<sup>154</sup>

These strategies should be employed and will contribute to the effectiveness of the group process and learning in the implementation of a curriculum.

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<sup>152</sup> Mark Tennant, *Psychology and Adult Learning, Second Edition* (London: Routledge, 1997), 110. According to Tennant, adult learning texts select material on group dynamics that will help the adult educator: 1) observe groups, 2) interpret their observations, and 3) intervene in the group process.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 109. Tennant goes on to give a thorough description of the many theories of group development. Of particular interest is the theory of Bradford *et al.* (1964) which identifies 1) ambiguity, 2) self-investment and participation, 3) collaboration and learning from peers, 4) motivation for learning, 5) experienced behavior and feedback and 6) group growth and development.

<sup>154</sup> Joseph L. Armstrong, "Seven Keys for Small Group Success," *Adult Learning* 15, no.1 (2004): 34.

## **Conclusion: From Theory to Practice**

Based on the review and analysis in this chapter it is now possible to suggest a theoretical framework that begins to address research questions 2, 3, and 4:

2) Given the Biblical model of the missional family, what can the church do to effectively challenge families to live as missional families in the current cultural and ministry contexts?

3) What kinds of learning and what kind of tools might guide Christian families into missional living?

4) What is the identity, spiritual formation and mission of a missional family? How might a curriculum guide families to understand their own identity, formation and mission and make commitments to be missional families?

It is possible to lead families to make commitments to live and act as missional families. In order to use an educational curriculum to accomplish this outcome, the following principles should be incorporated: 1) The curriculum should be developed as an educational program informed by the missional model of ministry to families. 2) The curriculum should incorporate an understanding of the definitions of the missional family. 3) The curriculum should be a form of “dialogue education” designed to teach for commitment and transformation. 4) The curriculum should leverage the unique characteristics of adult learners – drawing on and building on their individual experiences and their learning styles and the unique characteristics of adult and intergenerational groups – forging the adult learners into a learning community and engaging the families in cognitive apprenticeships. 5) The curriculum should intentionally use strategies to motivate learning.

The next chapter explores the design and methodology for the research investigating the extent to which a missional curriculum can bring about a commitment of families to be missional families, as well as a commitment to the practices that will reinforce that commitment. It gives an account of the choice of particular methods of data collection and describes the project based on the framework presented in the current chapter.

## **Chapter 4**

### **PROJECT DESIGN**

The last chapter described conceptual models for church ministry to families and presented the educational methodology that will be used in the pilot project. This chapter will detail the design, implementation, and analysis of a pilot project that is within the missional model of church ministry towards family. The project was designed to lead families into a discovery process of their identity as Christian families on mission in the world. Families were asked to become a learning community reflecting on their individual experiences and challenging each other to make new commitments as missional families. Beginning with recruitment into the pilot project, each family was asked to integrate explored concepts into its own past, and, eventually, future, life experience. All the families are members of Peachtree Presbyterian Church. Peachtree's leadership has been engaged in dialogue with other churches in the PC(USA) to determine ways to be faithful and relevant in a mainline denomination. This conversation has resulted in the creation of Presbyterian Global Fellowship (PGF) and is focusing churches in the PC(USA) on the process of becoming missional churches. Families in the pilot project had heard some missional language but were unclear as to what "missional" means for them in their everyday lives. The pilot project and missional family curriculum was a natural vehicle to cascade missional theology at Peachtree, whose predominant and growing demographic is young families.

The project employed a curriculum based on the theoretical frameworks explored in the previous chapter. As the curriculum was planned and implemented over the course of 10 weeks, it took the shape of "dialogue education" focusing on the identity, spiritual

formation, and vocation of the missional family. The curriculum considered the unique characteristics of adult learners – drawing on and building on their individual experiences and their learning styles. The curriculum also reflected the unique characteristics of both adult and intergenerational groups – forging the adult learners into a learning community and engaging the families in cognitive apprenticeships. Families had new experiences in varied learning groups: an adult learning group, an intergenerational group as well as their own unique family group. The intent of the curriculum was that families understand the biblical model of missional families and made commitments, themselves, to be missional families. The commitments would transform families, who would in turn, be a part of transforming the world through the love of Jesus Christ. Chapter five will measure the commitments and transformation of the families.

This chapter will begin with a brief rationale for the choice of a curriculum to meet the goal of making missional families. Next, it will describe the design and implementation of the pilot project and its missional curriculum based on the theoretical framework of Chapter three. Finally, it will show the types of data collected throughout the scope of the project, with an analysis of that data presented in Chapter five.

### **Choosing to Use a Missional Curriculum**

Once a decision is made to minister to families within a missional model, a critical look at ministry and its programs and purposes is necessary. The church must provide relevant and meaningful equipping opportunities for parents and families in light of cultural realities and informed by a biblical theology of God's intention for families. Families must be led to understand the biblical model of missional families and

challenged to make commitments to live missionally. There are many vehicles a church can use to serve families within the missional model. J.W. White identifies six models for family intergenerational learning:

- 1) Family Groups,
- 2) Weekly Classes,
- 3) Workshops or Events,
- 4) Worship Services,
- 5) Worship-Education Programs, and,
- 6) All-Congregation Camps.<sup>155</sup>

The missional curriculum and the pilot project which incorporated the curriculum are a mixture of a family group (gathering several families more informally), weekly classes (more formal teaching usually on Sundays), and a workshop/event (a specified number of days of teaching focused on a specific topic).

## **Project Design and Implementation**

After defining a biblical theology of families and determining the need for churches to teach this role within the Christian education of the church, the next step was to design a missional curriculum to guide families to make commitments to be missional families.

### *Developing the Curriculum*

The overall curricular design for this project was adapted from Jane Vella's educational model which suggests the following seven steps for project design:

- 1) Who? (who is involved: the participants)
- 2) Why? (why is there a need for the design or curriculum: the rationale)
- 3) When? (when will the learning work take place: the timeline)

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<sup>155</sup> J.W. White, *Intergenerational religious education: Models, theory and prescription for interage life and learning in the faith community* (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1988), 3-4.



- 4) Where? (where will the learning take place: the environment)
- 5) What? (what will be the content of the learning: the content)
- 6) What For? (what are the objectives, what will be learned: the objectives)
- 7) How? (the syllabus and outline of the learning tasks, activities and materials: the design)<sup>156</sup>

## 1) Who?

Pilot project families were invited to participate based on church membership, the parents' perceived strong commitment to Jesus Christ, and the parents' perceived strong commitment to their families. Families were also chosen with their family stage in mind – each family had two parents married to one another and children either in the preschool and/or early elementary years. The homogenous age-range of the participant families' children was helpful in the development of the intergenerational components of the curriculum. Before a family agreed to participate, the presenter asked each family to review the family contract in order to understand the expectations involved in participating in the pilot project. Families were also asked to pray about their involvement. Only one family declined participation.

Eight families formed the learning community. During the course of the project, the families experienced three different group configurations: an all-adult group made up of the eight adult couples, an intergenerational group made up of the eight couples and their children, and the individual families as groups. In each of the six learning sessions which constituted the group experience of the pilot project, the bulk of the learning was in the all-adult group. In a portion of three sessions, the missional family curriculum

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<sup>156</sup> Jane Vella, *Taking Learning to Task: Creative Strategies for Teaching Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 89. I was introduced to this outline by fellow Doctor of Ministry colleague, Tim Cox's thesis, who also was involved in a curriculum design resulting in transformational learning.

employed a type of homogenous “cluster” of two-parent families with young children. Between group sessions, the individual family groups (sometimes with but most of the time without the children) met to do work on the Bible studies and missional family worksheets.

## 2) Why?

This project was designed generally because of the need of the American Christian family and particularly because of the needs of families in the presenter’s congregation. In the congregational setting where the pilot project took place, the dramatic growth of young families in the membership has necessitated strategic thinking about how to coach families in a different way.<sup>157</sup> The program also reflects a need for the church to radically change its paradigm of ministry to families given the context of culture and the needs of families in that context. When the church chooses to minister to families within a missional model, families are equipped to live as “salt and light” in the culture generally, and every place that the families go, every day of their lives, specifically. Churches must develop practical ways to guide families into this understanding and into renewed commitment to live missionally. This curriculum and pilot project explored one way that a congregation can “make missional families.”

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<sup>157</sup> In the past five years, this local congregation has baptized from 150 – 180 babies annually. According to PC(USA) statistics, these figures represent two times more baby baptisms than any other congregation within the denomination. The presenter believes that this reality is both a unique challenge and a responsibility for the church leadership.

### 3) When?

The curriculum was implemented over the course of 10 weeks, from February to April, 2007.

### 4) Where?

Five of the six sessions took place in classrooms in a church. The groups engaged in the learning community for the particular session determined which room was selected. The rooms were outfitted with white boards and plenty of space to divide into smaller groups. Chairs were placed so that the group could interact easily and naturally. The sixth session took place in the gymnasium of the church. The reflection “homework” and family assignments were done in the families’ homes away from the church setting.

### 5) What?

The missional model for the ministry of the church to the family is still developing in the local congregation. The curriculum employed in this project attempted to give families, and ultimately the church, a tool to use to equip families to be all that God intends as his agents in the world, in this time and place. Based on a biblical paradigm of the church’s ministry, the curriculum led families into a discovery of their identity as Christian families on mission in the world. Families were asked to become a learning community reflecting on their individual experiences and challenging each other

to make new commitments to claim:

- 1) **a missional identity:** loving God and each other, through the development of a *Family Creed* built upon core beliefs and a *Family Covenant* built upon core values;
- 2) **a missional formation:** practicing loving God and each other, through the development of *Family Commitments* built upon core practices; and
- 3) **a missional vocation:** taking that love wherever the family goes, and joining God's love and work in the world, through the development of a *Family Calling* built upon core contexts.

#### 6) What For?

The missional curriculum was designed to meet the objective of making missional families: guiding families to make commitments in the identity, formation, and vocation of their family life. As Osmer noted (see chapter 3), the goal of all teaching in the church is to teach faith. He named at least four aspects of that faith: beliefs, relationship with Jesus Christ, commitment, and mystery. Though all four of these parts of faith were arguably vital aspects to consider as the missional curriculum was developed, guiding families to a new *commitment* to God as missional families was the primary objective of the presenter.

Osmer recommended a three-step process for teaching for commitment.<sup>158</sup> The first step is to “choose the area of commitment that is the focus of our teaching.” The objective of the missional curriculum was that families make commitments to be missional families. It encouraged family commitment to God-honoring relationships with

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<sup>158</sup> Osmer, 117.

God, family members, and the world. Underlying the curriculum was the premise that God is at work in the family, transforming families and then sending them into the world to join him in transforming the world.

A paradoxical factor in this sort of transformation as a result of an educational experience is that there is no formula which ensures transformation. The curriculum can provide experiences to interact with content that builds on each former experience, and can lead families through steps of critical reflection and new plans of action but, ultimately, God alone will do the transforming work in these families. Experience (through a curriculum) is a part of the transformation but works only in conjunction with God's work through the Holy Spirit. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians,

*What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.<sup>159</sup>*

## 7) How?

Osmer's second recommended step was to "decide on the basic pattern that our teaching will take, a pattern which should include five different aspects of commitment."

These five aspects are:

- 1) *Remembering*: Inviting students to recollect important parts of their life stories in relation to the focus of our teaching;
- 2) *Reflecting*: Inviting students to stand back from their lives to discern important patterns or themes;
- 3) *Encountering*: Inviting students to engage some aspect of the Christian story, especially as it is brought into focus in Jesus Christ.
- 4) *Sharing*: Inviting students to disclose parts of their story usually kept hidden from others.

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<sup>159</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:5-7 (English Standard Version).

- 5) *Deciding*: Inviting them to make decisions about how they will live their lives differently in light of new understandings of who they are.<sup>160</sup>

Each of the teaching sessions and family exercises in the missional curriculum engaged this pattern, moving families toward commitments in identity, formation, and vocation.

Osmer's third step was to "create or find learning activities that can be used in each of the different parts of our teaching." Effectively implementing this third step necessarily required the project designer to know the context of the learning environment as well as the people and the ways in which they might best learn.<sup>161</sup> The learning activities in the curriculum were designed to lead the participants to "dialogue education" in the weekly sessions. But, even more important for long term impact, families were coached in new ways of living as and calling each other to be missional families by each other as well as by the project designer. The family assignments and the family contract engaged families (sometimes adults only, sometimes the whole family) as a learning community in missional family living. The success of the curriculum in making missional families was dependent on guiding families to understand how to best engage their own family unit in learning and making commitments. Choices for being effective included the choice of time that the family would engage together in thinking and acting on their missional identity, the choice of the style and content of activities they would use to reinforce missional formation, and the ways that they would, in the end, choose to live as missional families. Every family's paradigm of missional living is particular and the missional curriculum guided them through a family group process of determining their own unique paradigm.

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<sup>160</sup> Osmer, 120.

<sup>161</sup> The project designer has been a pastor in the congregation and has been engaged in ministry with and to the participating families.

### *Missional Families Training Components*

Overview: Families were required to follow a regimen of regular meals together, prayer and devotionals, and play together throughout the Missional Family Training module. In addition to these individual practices, families attended a series of seminars that introduced them to the biblical model and practical definitions of the missional family, the family systems theory, and the concepts of covenant and calling. Each family engaged the curriculum following this sequence:

I. Sign Family Missional Training Contract and live according to the contract throughout the ten week training.

The Missional Training Contract was designed so that family members could spend intentional time with one another. The contract included a model that suggested (and required as a part of participation in the pilot project) appropriate time and necessary activities for living as missional families. The intention was to begin a “cognitive apprenticeship” for the families as they engaged the curriculum to become missional families. Throughout the training, families were given strategies and were coached to apply those strategies in their daily family lives.<sup>162</sup>

II. Fill Out Pre-Assessment.<sup>163</sup>

The assessment was designed to gauge the family’s perception of their own mastery of missional identity, formation, and vocation. Husband and wife were asked to separately rate five behaviors that connected to identity, five that connected to formation, and five connected to mission.

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<sup>162</sup> Kevin Oliver, “*Situated Cognition and Cognitive Apprenticeships*,” Virginia Tech University, <http://www.edtech.vt.edu/edtech/id/models/cog.html> (accessed October 29, 2007).

<sup>163</sup> See pre-assessment in appendix B.

III. Attend five learning sessions.

*1) Missional Family Overview: A new biblical model*

*Identity: Family Creeds*

Adult-only learning session one was designed to set initial expectations and present clearly the objectives for the program. Part of the agenda included time to allow the participants to share their experiences establishing the dialogical nature of the training.

*2) Family Systems Model*

*Identity: Family Covenants – Biblical overview*

Learning session two introduced family systems theory. Time to discuss the first assignment was part of the agenda. A Biblical survey of covenant was presented. Balswick and Balswick's covenant spiral was also presented. Again, the agenda included time to allow experiences from the participants to contribute to the learning process. Content was presented through the process of dialogical conversation. Children were brought into the learning process and different learning styles were engaged, particularly in the role play/reenactment of the calling of the disciples and through playing "Follow the Leader."

*3) Domestic Church: Family as Vocation*

Adult-only learning session three introduced the concept of family life as vocation and the concept of "domestic church" (one of the missional church descriptors). Participants engaged the material and shared stories from their own experience. Participants reflected on passages describing domestic church with the leader.

*4) Formation: Family Commitments*

This intergenerational "cluster" learning experience engaged families concerning the things that should be regular parts of family life for missional family living. A video was used to start discussion about family living. Family members described their favorite part of the week that they shared together. Families chose five things that they want to do regularly in order to grow in their relationship with God and each other. These five things were reported to the family cluster.

*5) Missional Family Conclusion: Discovering Contexts*

*Vocation: Family Calling*

The adult-only group met to study Bible passages related to the calling of God's people in and for the world. Collaborative learning and sharing of family contexts and strategies to live as missional families structured the bulk of the meeting. The framework for missional families was reviewed and discussed as a whole. Families reflected on their learning experience and the commitments they were making as well as contributed to thinking about the future uses of the curriculum.



#### IV. Attend One Family Activity Night

This intergenerational night was designed to encourage families playing and relating to each other.

#### V. Complete Missional Family Worksheets<sup>164</sup>

- 1) *Identity: Core Beliefs and Family Creed* – given at the end of session one based on Luke 9:18-27. This exercise asked parents to consider the questions Jesus asked the disciples and then answer the questions for themselves to begin to identify their core beliefs leading to the development of their Family Creed.
- 2) *Identity: Core Values and Family Covenant* – given at the end of session three and based on Luke 10:25-37. This exercise asked parents to study the parable of the Good Samaritan and then answer questions about how family members either pass each other by or minister to each other, in order to begin to identify their core values leading to the development of their Family Covenant.
- 3) *Formation: Core Practices and Family Commitment* — given at the end of session four and based on Mark 1:35-39. This exercise asked parents to reflect on the life patterns of Jesus and then identify their own “typical” and “ideal” family life rhythms to begin to identify the needed core practices for missional living, leading to their Family Commitment.
- 4) *Vocation: Core Contexts and Family Calling*—given at the end of session five and based on Genesis 12:1-3, 26:4-5, Matthew 5:13-16, and 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. This exercise asked parents to contemplate the role of God’s people in the world, and then identify their own family contexts, leading to the development of their Family Calling

#### VI. Fill Out Post- Assessment

The post-assessment was identical to the initial assessment, gauging perceptions of mastery of missional identity, formation, and vocation. Again, husband and wife evaluated their family separately. Comparisons of the pre and post assessments will be made in Chapter five.

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<sup>164</sup> See Appendix C.

## VII. Post-Training Interviews

Three of the eight families were interviewed about their experience and their learning process to gauge possible commitment and transformation.<sup>165</sup>

### *Implementation*

After the project was designed, the learning sessions and activities structured, and the families recruited, the implementation phase of the project began. In each session, the learning components and family assignment were connected to a theoretical framework which engaged motivational strategies and promoted transformation and commitment. Appendix C contains a table that tracks the implementation stage of the project and illustrates the connection between the pilot project's learning activities and the theoretical and methodological framework outlined in chapter three. The table details each curriculum component and its learning objective, the learning methodology employed, its theoretical framework, the motivational strategies employed as well as the components role in transformation and commitment. The "motivational strategies" column in the table connects the work of Raymond Wlodkowski<sup>166</sup> to the curriculum components. As adult learners, the participants were motivated as they were included in the learning process and called to be peers in the learning process. The "transformation and change" column connects the work of Richard Osmer<sup>167</sup> to the curriculum components. All of the

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<sup>165</sup> Families were selected strictly by the availability to be interviewed.

<sup>166</sup> Raymond J. Wlodkowski, *Enhanced Adult Motivation To Learn* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1999), 292-5. These pages include a chart summarizing all the motivational conditions (inclusion, meaning, competence and attitude), purposes and specific strategies. The numbered items enumerated in the chart are Wlodkowski's specific charted motivational strategies.

<sup>167</sup> Osmer, 120. Osmer's five aspects of commitment are remembering, reflecting, encountering, sharing, and deciding.

components are designed to engender knowledge and commitments that will lead to the transformation of these families into missional families.

The components of the missional curriculum were designed to motivate adults to understand, personalize, and commit to missional family living as they developed a missional identity, practiced missional formation, and found their missional vocation. The learning components were building blocks in the learning process. Clearly, the variety of learning methodologies was important as different adults were engaged in the missional family curriculum. The theoretical frameworks employed acknowledged the unique nature of the adult-learners and incorporated intergenerational learning methods when the children were present. The motivational strategies were helpful as the curriculum focused on the adult learner. And finally, the learning components led intentionally to transformation and commitment.

### **Types of Data Collected**

To determine the effectiveness of the missional curriculum as a tool for commitment and transformation, data was collected during the implementation of the project. The data collected included:

- 1) the learning styles of a sample of the participants,<sup>168</sup>
- 2) the pre-assessment and post-assessment evaluations gauging missional living,<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Learning by Doing, “Practical methods to implement the experiential learning cycle,” <http://www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/gibbs/ch4.htm> (accessed October 20, 2007). This site introduces a model for applying the Kolb learning profile cycle to the learning process and curriculum development

<sup>169</sup> For a sample of participants pre-assessments and post-assessment ratings, see Appendix E.

3) the videos of the learning sessions, which showed the learning process and dialogue of the participants,

4) the family worksheets, which gathered data concerning missional family identity, formation and vocation:<sup>170</sup>

- a. identity: core beliefs and Family Creeds
- b. identity: core values and Family Covenants
- c. formation: core practices and Family Commitments
- d. mission: core contexts and Family Callings

5) the video interviews of three of the couple participants, which gave narrative evaluation of the curriculum as well as a gauge of missional family development.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has traced the development and the implementation of the curriculum and the pilot project. It has systematically shown the connection between methodology and learning theory to the praxis (development and implementation) of the pilot project. In addition, this chapter traced the types of data that were collected to measure the effectiveness of the project to make missional families – families who have committed to a missional identity, formation, and mission in their family life. In the next chapter, this data will be analyzed briefly in a quantitative manner, and more thoroughly in a qualitative manner, giving examples of data that show the learning process and the missional commitments made by the participants.

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<sup>170</sup> For a sample of participant's worksheet response, see Appendix F.

## **Chapter 5**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

In the last chapter, the development and implementation of the missional family training and pilot project were linked to the methodological framework in Chapter 3. In the implementation phase, data was collected to determine how effectively the project made missional families. This chapter will present the collected data and analyze the effectiveness of the project at leading families both to understand the biblical model of missional families and to commit to missional identity, formation, and mission in their family living. The chapter focuses on research question four:

What are the identity, spiritual formation, and mission of a missional family? How might a curriculum guide families to understand their own identity, formation, and mission and make commitments to be missional families?

The following data will be presented and analyzed:

- 1) A sample of Learning Styles of the participants<sup>171</sup> and an analysis of learning style impact on the curriculum design and implementation
- 2) Data supporting learning and commitment on Family Identity including learning session dialogue, post-training interviews, and Family Creeds and Family Covenants developed as a part of the individual family assignments.
- 3) Data supporting learning and commitment on Family Formation including learning session dialogue, post-training interviews, and Family Commitments developed as a part of the individual family assignments.

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<sup>171</sup> The Kolb Learning Style Inventory (vs 1) was given to the participants to determine style preferences. The sample is based on 30% of the participants (the first who responded).

- 4) Data supporting learning and commitment on Family Mission including post-training interviews and Family Callings developed as a part of the individual family assignments.
- 5) Data supporting the overall growth of individual families toward missional living using post-training interviews as well as the pre-assessment and the post-assessment evaluations.

### **Learning Styles**

The participants were given Kolb's learning style inventory (LSI) during the pilot project. The LSI consists of a list of nine groups of four statements. The participants chose their preference from 1(low) to 4(high) for each set of the four statements. To ensure statistic validity, Kolb's inventory filters out three scores for each learning style. Participants can score a maximum of 24 in an area. The higher the score, the higher the preference for a particular learning style. Seen below, the results are typical of any adult learning group.<sup>172</sup> Participants vary as to their learning preferences and their learning style. The variance among the learning styles of participants suggested that a missional training program employing a variety of educational methods would be more successful than a program employing a single method. The data collected confirmed the diversity of methods chosen in the development of the missional curriculum. The different preferences among participants also created a richer learning environment with each participant contributing not only his or her experiences but his/her individual learning

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<sup>172</sup> The sample represents one half of the participating adults. The presenter first used the inventory in her "Adult Learning" course as a part of North Carolina State University's EdD curriculum in Higher Education Administration. The LSI (first version) that was used was given to the presenter in the course and is statistically normed. There are several updated versions of LSI (which were not utilized in the course of this study).

preference and process. One can see in the table below that no one learning preference was dominant. Instead, it is clear that the participants varied greatly in their preferences.

**Figure 5-1**  
**Kolb's Learning Style Inventory Ratings (by project participants)**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Concrete Experience</b>	<b>Reflective Observation</b>	<b>Abstract Conceptualization</b>	<b>Active Experimentation</b>
HE	9	19	22	10
WE	20	20	9	10
HG	14	10	19	18
WG	14	12	17	20
HT	11	19	16	16
WT	12	11	20	19
HW	14	8	16	22
WW	11	16	12	20

### **Missional Family Identity**

Participants were introduced to the biblical model of missional families in the pilot project missional training course. The first aspect of becoming a missional family is to establish the identity of a missional family. The identity of a missional family impacts the relationship between God and the individual members, as well as relationships between family members. The 72 apostles in Luke 10 were sent into the city and the home to preach peace. In the missional model of ministry, the church must preach right relationship (peace) with God and between family members in the home. In order to live that peace, a family must establish a Christian identity. Families were introduced to concepts and biblical passages and, through dialogue education with a learning community, reflected on those concepts and biblical passages in order to engage their

understanding of missional identity and to guide them to make a commitment to missional family identity.

Many of the comments and discussions in the learning sessions reflected an understanding of the importance of a missional identity. In session two, SB<sup>173</sup> said in dialogue with the group, reflecting on an identity assignment, “Until you recognize and claim your identity, that you are a Christian, you can’t think about how faith applies to other areas of your life. We discussed this last weekend with a couple we had over for dinner.” For Couple B, reflection and learning resulted in sharing their experience and knowledge with another couple. The grassroots cascading of the concepts and commitments of the missional family was exciting and unexpected, especially this early in the training module.

In the sessions, through dialogue education, the adults engaged the tools provided for the sessions to share their experiences. For example, in session two, Couple T reflected on their identified core beliefs as a part of their identity assignment and recognized their different perspectives and their need to claim shared identity. WT said, “[We] set our core beliefs and had lots of conversation about it.” HT added, “...we both brought some different perspective.” A significant part of the success of the project was giving families the tools to have conversation and learning on their own schedules and in their own particular way. SB, focusing on identity and the covenant that she shares with her husband, said, “I am learning that our relationship is significant and that I need to support G better. I don’t always do that and I have a lot of power with G.” Her husband GB added, “And I need to affirm her ...if I do this, it comes back to me.” BE added to

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<sup>173</sup> When identifying a couple, the last initial will be used. Individual participants are identified by first and last initials.



the covenant conversation, “When you give out [support] and don’t expect [to get support back], you get so much more. You can’t [live your commitment to each other] unless you know that your spouse is in it [with you]. We both focus on each other and then it works. [It all goes] back to our covenant to each other and our commitment to God that helps us love each other.”

In session three, Couple G added to the conversation about their learning process and the core need for Christian identity. SG said, “Since we’ve started this journey, we realized our focus is not God. We are just about our business. We all need to be on the same page [about our identity].” JG added, “I’m glad for this course to help us focus and reclaim our real identity.” There was a sense among the couples that the training was guiding them to understand who they were as missional families and the commitments that they needed to make to be those people.

Identity understanding and commitment also surfaced in the post-training interviews. WW summarized his learning concerning identity: “What you do flows out of who you are. I’m better in my everyday life, when I am working on my interior life.”

Outside of the learning session and interviews, parents worked on their missional identity in two independent assignments. In the first assignment, families determined their core beliefs and wrote Family Creeds, which defined their relationship and commitment to God. These creeds showed a desire to understand and commit to being Christian and missional as families. Below are two Family Creed examples:

Couple E:

We believe that God loves us so much that He sent His Son to live, die and rise again for us.

We believe that God, through His Holy Spirit, lives in us and guides us.

We believe that God will forgive our sins if we ask him to and that we are to forgive each other and others, just as He forgives us.

We believe that we are to try to live our lives to be more like Jesus, that He is the example that we all should try to model.

Couple T:

We believe that God is creator of the universe and that Jesus is his only Son. We believe that they are the center of our lives and that everything we do should bring us closer to God and should glorify him. We grow closer to God through study and prayer and we bring others close to God through our service and ministry.

Both Couples E and T make theological confessions in their creeds. Both have a world view that puts God at the center. These creeds provide a “stake in the ground” of distinctively Christian belief. Both creeds elicit a response from the families to live in a different way as a result of who God is. Their family identity is different as a result of their understanding of God.

In the second assignment, families determined their core values and wrote Family Covenants that defined their relationships with and commitments to one another. These covenants showed a desire to understand and commit to being Christian and missional as families. Below are two Family Covenant examples:

Couple E:

We believe that God calls us to love each other and others just as He loves us, and to serve each other and others as He served his family and friends and the world. We believe that God calls us to live, and we will try to live, with Jesus as the center of our lives as individuals and as a family.

Couple G:

Witnesseth:

Whereas, the G family acknowledges that God created the family as a sacred, domestic church to serve him and to give an authentic, powerful witness to the world, and Whereas, God calls the family always to live as Christians, Now, therefore, in consideration of the foregoing, each member of the G family hereby promises to rely fully on God’s love, grace, and mercy to practice these ten gifts toward one another at all times:

Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Forgiveness, Self-control

In witness whereof, the G family members set their hands to duly execute this covenant effective for all time.

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signatures

Couple E's covenant exhibits an understanding of God's relationship as a model for family relationships. It acknowledges a dependence that all Christians have on God and our commitment to Jesus Christ that allows us to be able to love those who are our nearest neighbors. It also expresses the family's commitment and desire to live in right relationship (peace) with each other as a reflection of God's love for them. Couple G's covenant picks up on the taught concept "domestic church" and the Balswick and Balswick covenant spiral. The G family made a specific decision to make this covenant commitment a regular part of their life. Each of their family members (father, mother, and son) signed the covenant as an official recognition of their commitment.

### **Missional Family Formation**

The second aspect of the biblical model of missional family living is formation. Once the identity of a missional family is determined and is a part of the family commitment, formation is the practice of missional identity. The relationships between God and the individual family members and between the various family members grow and shape the family. Families were introduced to concepts and biblical passages and, through dialogue education with a learning community, reflected on those concepts and biblical passages in order to engage their understanding of missional formation and to guide them to make a commitment to missional family formation.

Many of the reflections and discussions in the learning sessions, reflected an understanding of the importance of a missional formation. In session three, WS said:

We don't live in a monastery ...[there is a] profound effect we can have on each other for accountability and growth... If we help our children understand faith in our home and through our relationships, their future homes will reflect Christ.

WT added to the idea of life together as formation:

Family is a practice field. Our kids and we are more comfortable living our faith in the world if we are doing it at home. I need to practice.

Both WS and WT understood their family life as a place where faith is practiced. JG acknowledged that his worklife leaves him weary and when he gets home, he does not want to think about being intentional about practicing spiritual formation with his family. He said, "I have to develop and cultivate [our] Christian environment. I thought it was going to be a hassle but it is actually recharging and energizing."

At times, the learning session turned to ideas and practices that were a part of individual family formation. In session three, JN contributed:

As kids are older, [there are] more demands. We've loved the opportunity to do family devotionals.... We have meals and conversation, [and] we want to try reading the Bible maybe after the meal before we get up. We want to discuss with the kids more.

Her husband, MN added,

We want to discuss Sunday sermons with them and then after dinner, revisit the sermon and scripture.... [We can] create mini Bible study and they don't know what we're doing.... We want to try to make it natural, a part of our life.

In the final interviews, the understanding and commitment to formation was expressed by

TW:

Bringing the children to church is easy. But talking [with them] about faith and their life and how God wants us to live life... and what does [the] Bible say [about living our life].... [It's] important to establish now their [commitment to] faith so they can have [a] way to live that keeps them close to God.

A common theme when addressing formation learning and commitments was the children. The parents had a deep desire for their children to grasp and commit to faith.

Parents wanted their children to see the importance of faith and the parents' own commitment to Jesus Christ. VE said:

....we model how to live and they imitate us. But we want faith and church to be something they want to do. Our prayer is that as we build the foundation, whatever happens during their adolescent years, they'll come back to it. We also want them to give and serve and help people because we do it.

After the learning session, participants were asked to reflect and make decisions about their own missional family formation. Each family determined core practices necessary to live missionally and made Family Commitments as they considered their missional family formation. Below are Family Commitment Examples:

Family S:

We commit time together each day. We will eat together, play together, read the Bible and pray together. We will talk with one another and listen. The time we spend together matters most. That time will not be replaced by anything else, no matter the reason. As our lives change and evolve, we will be flexible as new schedules arise. However, our family commitment to time together will always come first.

Family W:

We are committed to following God's purposes for our lives by making difficult choices in an effort to align our priorities with those of God.

These Family Commitments showed a desire to understand and commit to being Christian and missional in family living.

### **Missional Family Vocation**

The third aspect of the biblical model of missional family living is vocation. Once a missional family commits to its identity and practiced formation, the family lives out its vocation in a particular context. Families begin to understand themselves as “sent” into their contexts of work and play and school and neighborhood to join what God is doing. Families become “salt and light” pointing people to the reconciling love of God in Jesus Christ. The curriculum introduced concepts and Biblical passages and, through dialogue education with a learning community, families reflected on those concepts and biblical passages in order to engage their understanding of missional vocation and to guide them to make a commitment to their own missional family vocation.

Because the idea of a missional vocation was the concept that was the least familiar to the participants, conversational data concerning missional vocation was not collected until the final interviews. JG said in his interview:

[The] impact for me is one of perspective. We know we need a relationship with Jesus. I needed the model and I am trying to apply [the truth] that I am responsible – our family has responsibility to live our faith in the family and impact the world. We need a mission that mirrors God’s vision for us. [This model] puts the emphasis back on us. Society is so mobile. We could easily end up moving to another city, another church, but we are grasping that our family has a mission wherever we are or may be.

Like identity and formation, vocation is particular. JG understood that the church cannot predetermine his family’s vocation. A family must know its identity, practice spiritual

formation, and then by evaluating its context, determine its vocation. It is a continual, daily process that is the responsibility of the family. The church serves as the coach, and the family gets to be “in the game.” For JG, the process of the discerning his family calling was energizing and was guided by the missional training module. He said:

This missional family course has been an important component of how I recharge my batteries. We enjoyed it and keep going back to the work we did....The impact of the responsibility being ours has been transforming. The church is not a place over there – it’s us and it’s here. The idea is that faith is not just [practiced] at church – it’s [practiced] all the time everyday. The course made that real.... The things we read, the discussions we have, the worksheets – all of those made the commitments and the faith ours.

VE said about her family calling:

We try to make [faith] so much a part of who we are that it’s a natural extension wherever we are,... at home, at Chastain, wherever. [We do that] when we model Christ – being true to our word, showing integrity, being kind, loving – living in a way that is attractive[to other people] because the way we live is different.

After the learning session, families were asked to reflect and make decisions about their own missional family vocation. Each family determined core contexts and claimed their own Family Callings as they considered their missional family vocation.

Below are Family Calling examples:

Family G:

The calling of our family is to create and build an inviting and a welcoming home of love, faith, order, truth, joy, warmth, education, service, work, and relaxation and to provide opportunity for each of us to become responsibly independent and productively interdependent in order to serve one another, our church, our neighborhood, and the world through understanding and living the gospel of Jesus Christ

Family W:

In all we do, wherever we find ourselves, we will show Christ's love to the world through our words and our actions.

These Callings showed a desire to understand and commit to being Christian and missional as families.

### **Missional Family Living**

Throughout the pilot project, families gained a cumulative understanding of the biblical model of “missional families” and a growing commitment to engage missional family living. In session two, GB said, “We were challenged by the early assessment – where we disagreed on how we were doing in certain areas. We want to be more intentional.... This is helping us.” MN said in Session three, “This [process] is giving me the bigger picture.” In the final interview, SJ gave a comprehensive understanding of missional family living and the role the project played in her understanding and commitment:

I learned you have to be intentional about your relationship with the Lord. We need to come together as a family and say what we believe. Everything we do needs to be intentional – a strong relationship with Lord is our center and where we start and that shapes how we have strong relationships as a family and how we want to live as salt and light....The missional family project gave us the tools and outlined for us what it is that we need to do to get right with the Lord, and then try to get right as a family so that we can make an impact on the world. The Creed and Covenant were key. Our Covenant involved showing the fruit of the spirit to each other, ...which lasted about 5 minutes. [After that], we needed to then go back to the Lord so we can be changed and live the fruit of the spirit to each other.

The pre-assessment and the post-assessments also provide a snapshot of the participant’s understanding of their mastery of and commitment to missional family living.<sup>174</sup> The participant is labeled with a first initial H (for husband) or W (for wife).

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<sup>174</sup> The pre-assessment and post-assessment comparison is helpful but do not stand alone. The assessments do not employ statistical validity and so should not be solely relied upon to determine the project’s effectiveness.



The second initial represents the family last name. Each column represents a participant's total scores in the three areas of identity, formation, and mission. The scores in each area are based on five questions that are correlated to the established definitions of missional family identity, formation, and vocation. The specific questions are listed by area:

Identity:

1. Our family spends quality time together.
4. Our kids know we love God.
7. We are good at listening to each other.
10. Our kids know we love them and think they are special.
13. Our family knows how to extend grace and forgive each other.

Formation:

2. Our family prays together.
5. Our family reads the Bible, individually and together.
8. Our family regularly worships.
11. Talking about our faith is a natural part of our family life.
14. We celebrate spiritual rites of passage.

Vocation:

3. We try to see and act on the needs of people around us.
6. Our neighbors know we are Christians.
9. Our neighbors know we care about them.
12. Our family is involved in serving our community.
15. Our family has a concern for what's going on in the world and how God is at work in the world.

Individual participants<sup>175</sup> scored themselves from 1 (low) to 10 high. The highest potential score in each area is 50. The scores gauge the perceived mastery in each area.

The participants are identified by column. "H" or "W" represents husband or wife. The next letter represents the family last name. The first column for each participant shows

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<sup>175</sup> Each participant filled out both assessments. Part of the exercise encouraged couples to compare their individual ratings as a starting point towards learning, dialogue, and family commitments.

the pre-assessment (Pr) totals while the second column represents the post-assessment (Pt) totals.

**Figure 5-2**  
**Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment Identity, Formation and Vocation Data**

	HE Pre	H E PtTt	WE Pr	WE Pt	H G Prr	HG PtTt	WG Pr	WG Pt	HS Prr	HS PtTt	WS Pr	WS Pt	HW Pr	HW Pt	WW Pr	WW Pt
Iden-tity Total	38	41	43	45	37	42	36	47	41	47	45	43	39	36	40	43
Forma tion Total	38	44	46	48	39	42	39	47	31	41	45	40	45	43	45	49
Voca-tion Total	36	42	43	42	33	41	35	44	30	43	30	38	34	34	39	41

There are some conclusions that can be drawn from the assessments. First, participants scored themselves consistently lowest in the area of vocation both in the pre-assessment and post assessment evaluations. Participants scored themselves highest in the area of missional formation. In most cases, participants felt they had increased their practice in the missional areas of identity, formation, and vocation. In 19 of the 24 categories, participants assessed themselves with a higher score for the post-assessment than the pre-assessment. Couple G experienced the most significant positive variance between the two assessments, with Couple E also exhibiting significant change.

## Conclusion

As the data suggests, participants in the missional project mastered the missional family model and made commitments to be missional families. In each aspect of missional family living, the families grasped the concepts and through dialogue education and the learning sessions, as well as through the individual family assignments, families

learned, grew, and made commitments to be missional families. The next chapter will review the scope of the project and enumerate the key findings and future applications for the missional family model and church's use of the model.

## **Chapter 6**

### **OUTCOMES**

This thesis sets forth a contextual approach of ministry to and with Christian families in a post-Christian culture and within a church that is seeking to define and live as a missional church. Recognizing the unique demands that every individual family experiences, the pilot project described here called eight families to live distinctively as missional families. The project, through a variety of learning tools mostly aimed at the adults and the establishment of a learning community, equipped these families to rediscover their identity, formation, and mission in the world, resulting in commitments to be missional families – families deeply devoted to Jesus Christ, joining what God is doing in the world and making an impact for God’s kingdom wherever they are. The curriculum brought the families together in order to send them out on mission in the world. Freudenburg describes the missional model of ministry that was the focus of the project and work:

Therefore, the people of God gather often as a congregation for encouragement, support, and training – only to return to their homes to be energized and sent into the world as witnesses to Jesus. The church evaluates its effectiveness not only by those coming to church but by those it sends equipped to their homes, communities and the world.<sup>176</sup>

This chapter will review the scope of the thesis and present the key findings of the research. Finally, it will begin to explore the future applications for the framework, methodology, and implementation of the curriculum.

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<sup>176</sup> Ben Freudenburg with Rick Lawrence, *The Family Friendly Church* (Loveland, Colorado: Vital Ministries of Group Publishing, Inc., 1998), 108.

## **Thesis Overview**

Beginning with the state of the American family, Chapter One detailed the challenge of living as a Christian family, and introduced the biblical concept of “missional families.” The role of the church in making “missional families” was explored and evaluated. Key definitions for the research topic were established and the research questions set forth the direction for the project.

In Chapter Two, the biblical model for “missional families” was established. The model reflects the sending of the 72 from Luke 10: 1) go into the house (that Jesus was going to) and preach peace, 2) stay in the house and 3) make the house the church. Churches must make missional families and, in order to follow the model, will guide families to make commitments to missional identity, missional formation, and missional mission. The chapter developed biblical and theological definitions of missional identity, formation, and mission. These definitions guided the design of the family assignments and the learning sessions in the pilot project curriculum.

Chapter Three reviewed literature relevant to the research topic. First, the review traced the church’s historical models of ministry to the family. Since the missional model of ministry informs the project, the chapter next reviewed literature describing missional families. Finally, the review considered literature related to Christian education and theories of learning and transformation. As a result of the literature reviewed, a framework for an effective missional curriculum was determined.

The project design, implementation, and analysis of the missional family training curriculum based on the literature review in the previous chapter was described in Chapter Four. The design section detailed the participants, the process, and the rationale

using Vella's seven strategic steps for project design. The implementation section charted the connection of the learning components within the project to the theoretical and methodological frames reviewed in Chapter Three, including dialogue education, adult learning, learning styles, and motivational strategies. The analysis section listed the types of data that were collected throughout the project to evaluate its success in making missional families.

Chapter Five gave a thorough description of the data. It charted the learning styles of the participants and used the learning session dialogue and final interviews (recorded by video), as well as the pre-assessments and post-assessments, to show the progress that families made toward understanding and committing to missional family living. It also analyzed the family's individual work as shown in their development of Family Creeds, Covenants, Commitments, and Callings.

### **Review of the Research Questions**

At the outset, the presenter identified a series of research questions to guide the scope of the project. This section will review the questions and the project results which answered these seminal questions.

*1) What is the biblical and theological basis for a missional family and for the church's responsibility to make missional families?*

The research undergirding Chapter Two, which gave a biblical paradigm for both the missional family, based on Luke 10, and a theological typology for the church's models of ministry to families, culminating in the missional model, answers this question. The missional family training curriculum incorporated both

the Biblical and theological basis for a missional family and is a program falling in the missional ministry frame.

*2) Given the Biblical model of the missional family, what can the church do to effectively challenge families to live as missional families in the current cultural and ministry contexts?*

Chapters Three, Four and Five answered Research Question Three. Chapter Three addressed the ways churches have historically ministered to the family and clearly defined the missional model of ministry to families. The curriculum design and implementation in Chapter Four laid out one way to challenge families to live as missional families in the current cultural climate in a large suburban/urban congregation. Chapter Five began to assess the effectiveness of the created curriculum as a tool for churches to make missional Christians.

*3) What kinds of learning and what kind of tools might guide Christian families into missional living?*

Chapters Three and Four answered Research Question Three. Chapter Three identified the factors that should be considered when developing tools within a missional model of ministry to families. These factors include the role of Christian education within the church and educational theories including dialogue education, adult learning, learning styles and motivational strategies. Chapter Four began with a list of activities that the church could use to guide families to be missional.

*4) What are the identity, spiritual formation, and mission of a missional family? How might a curriculum guide families to understand their own identity, formation, and mission and make commitments to be missional families?*

Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five provide the answer to Research Question Four. Chapter Two defined the missional family by its identity, spiritual

formation, and vocation. Chapter Three set the context for the designed and implemented missional family curriculum in Chapter Four. Chapter Five traced the impact of the curriculum on the pilot project participants as individual families as well as within a learning community.

## **Key Findings**

### *The Church's Role Must be Reshaped*

The church must be in touch with the culture and the role of the family. As the church attempts to reach the family operating within the culture, it must identify effective tools for ministry. Given the current cultural context and the current needs of families, the missional model offers an effective approach with biblical foundations. Ministering in this model, the church must draw on the best of the other ministry paradigms (therapeutic, programmatic, and equipping) to adjust its ministry. Churches must give effort to develop effective curriculums and learning communities which will guide families to explore and commit to missional living. The church becomes the equipper and coach of the families as they determine their unique identity, formation, and mission.

### *Listen to the Family*

In this new model, church staff members are not and cannot be the experts. The use of dialogue education and the acknowledgement throughout the course that each participant had unique perspective on what it means to live missionally reinforces this point. Within the missional model of ministry, families will guide the church to understand local contexts. Churches will understand their role as they listen to what the family needs in order to be equipped for missional living. Worship, Christian



Education, and other programs will necessarily change to meet these new needs. Pilot project participant WW coached the church in the final interview when he said,

We need practical applications to help us figure out what does it look like to live a missional family life together? [Sometimes the] church feels like a holy meeting that isn't practical. Or we go to separate Bible studies that don't always apply to our lives. It was really insightful to hear the "domestic church" concept. We need to not just do the "short burst" Sunday morning; we need to live that all the time. Faith needs to be born out of the home. It has been very useful to think about family creeds, covenant, and the rest.

His wife TW added, "And we have expanded our [family] activities to reinforce with the kids what we have learned."

### *Equip the Family*

Throughout the scope of the project, it became clear that the families understood and resonated with the biblical model of missional families. They wanted to be missional. Families grasped what they needed to do but did not know how to do it. All the pressures that families are experiencing in the current culture are barriers to making commitments to be missional families. Programs and coaching from the church are the most significant and impactful role that the church has with families. Participant VE spoke about the ways that the missional curriculum guided her family:

We were encouraged. We've got some of these things in place. But it did make us more deliberate about the choices we make so they know the things they need. We loved being with other families who were asking the same questions. We got some great ideas. There aren't a lot of settings that are helping us ask these questions about living the faith day to day.

Participant WW also spoke up about the fact that participating in the missional training had equipped him: "We need to be more intentional, and this has helped us."

### *Create Learning Communities of Families*

One of the most important aspects of the role of the church is to create groups of families where learning and growing in missional living is the focus. Once families are introduced to the missional concept and make the decision to live missionally, they know what to do. They are the experts on what they need and being together gives accountability and reflection time and leads to applying missional living concepts. The groups give opportunity to discuss and process Biblical stories and missional concepts at the church, then families go home and begin to apply individually what has been learned and experienced in the group. The pilot project created this kind of group which resulted in learning, accountability, and individual family application and commitment. JG spoke of the learning process:

The framework that you offered was helpful. You gave us hooks to hang things on. We got equipped and then we felt responsibility. [I] loved sitting with the group. [I] liked the way you facilitated. [I] learned much from the group. We learned new things and tools, but more than that the emphasis and the challenge and responsibility.... You go home and you figure it out... it's you... it's not that you can come to church and relieve yourself of the responsibility. You can't just come and get your boost for the next week. You have to go home and do it yourself. That was really important.

### *Offer Intergenerational Learning*

The structure of the project was heavily weighted with adult-only meetings. This was necessary given the ages of the children and the purpose of the curriculum. Parents are the ones who make the commitment to be missional. Parents appreciated the opportunity to do work as a couple in the three areas of the missional curriculum: identity, formation, and mission. However, they also wanted to have structured environments to share what they were learning with their children. The families used

these opportunities to grow their relationship with their children and to guide the children to make commitments to follow Jesus Christ. The conversation in the final interview with couple E was instructive. BE said:

We don't have many settings where we get to also be with our kids and were helped to know how to talk with them. We need some more opportunities to do that. We need structure and didn't know if we could do it but we're glad we did because we need the intentional thoughts about how we're living and we need our kids to know how important this is to us.

His wife, VE added:

It was interesting to share with our kids what we are doing. They keep bringing those up. That gives us the opportunity to reinforce what we were trying to do. It meant a lot to them that they got to be a part of our world. They see that we are growing in our faith and asking how we should live faithfully. It was good that we were all working together to come up with ideas and learning together.

BE concluded:

It was powerful to hear what was most important to them.... It touched my heart. When they say that the best thing we do all week is "have game night" – you don't realize the way things impact them.

The church needs to do a better job giving families opportunities to be together in learning environments. It is difficult for churches to find space and resources to make these kinds of programs happen, given the amount of programming that already occurs with children and student ministries. As a result of this intergenerational success, the pilot project church is evaluating how and when more intergenerational learning can be offered to the families.

## **Future Application**

### *Improving the Curriculum*

It is likely that the curriculum in its current form will be implemented within the current congregational setting again. Though there was an attempt to adjust the curriculum during the pilot project, both to motivate the adult learning and to improve the effectiveness of the project as it guided families to missional commitments, there are further changes that could potentially improve its further use.

### Timing

The curriculum was taught over a period of ten weeks in the early spring. Though the meetings occurred when families had already committed to be at the church, it was difficult for families to attend all of the meetings. Compression may be a good strategy. The curriculum could be implemented over five weeks and would potentially be better received in the fall or in January. The curriculum taught in this compressed format could be enhanced by monthly gatherings of the families – sharing and learning after the teaching is completed. It is also possible that the curriculum could be taught over a week-long summer family camp or, perhaps, at a family retreat.

### Family Stage of Participants

The project invited participation from families on the basis of their children's ages. This common-denominator created quick cooperative and collaborative learning, based on similar experience and challenges. The homogenous nature of the families made the intergenerational components of the curriculum easier to design. In the future, it would

be interesting to develop a missional family learning community where families were not at the same stages. Another option could be to add mentor couples who are at a different lifestage into the mix. These issues would be appropriate for future research.

#### Participants' Future Role as Mentors

The addition of mentors to the missional family training was considered in the original design and could be a strategic addition to the program. When the curriculum was created, the initial concept was to use the eight participating “first” families to be a part of leading other groups. As families serve in this capacity, the “missional family” concept will be cascaded throughout the congregation. As mentors, the participating families will also grow and reinforce missional living in their own families.

#### Adult Learning

The project was informed by, and the presenter was greatly helped by, research in the area of adult learning, especially Vella's dialogue learning, Wlodkowski's motivational strategies, and Osmer's steps to teaching for commitment. Churches need to stay connected not only to the context of culture but also to the latest learning research and strategy as they create opportunities to make missional families.

#### More Intergenerational Learning

As already mentioned, families want structured time to be together in church equipping environments as well as in less-structured play environments. The curriculum would benefit from at least one more intergenerational session. As a result of the success of the

intergenerational learning, the pilot congregation is considering more programs and opportunities to offer this type of experience.

### Setting

The choice of implementing the course in a congregational setting was intentional. However, it would be interesting to explore leading the course in a home setting. Childcare issues and finding the right time for the course would be a challenge. Sunday mornings were an ideal time for the pilot effort because families had already made a commitment to be at church. Setting and timing should be chosen deliberately.

### Training Follow-Up

The presenter has done some informal follow-up with the participants. However, it would be more effective to have a more systematic plan for follow-up in place for the next missional training. The presenter has obtained the website domains: mymissionalfamily.org, mymissionalfamily.com, missionalfamilies.com and missionalfamilies.org to develop some web resources using the Biblical model of missional family and focuses on the areas of identity, formation, and mission. In the future, these websites could be a part of collaborative and cooperative learning and could include books and resources, blogs, and curriculum ideas for churches. Another type of follow-up could involve weekly emailed devotionals to families that invite them to revisit their creeds, covenants, commitments and callings.

## **Future Uses of the Curriculum**

Since the implementation of the pilot project, the theoretical framework of the missional curriculum has been presented in different contexts including a denomination-wide conference and in Sunday school environments. In these two different places, the curriculum has been received with enthusiasm. In the denomination-wide contexts, staff and lay leaders from churches were introduced to the biblical model of missional families and were challenged to evaluate their own model of ministry to families. This seminar included over 100 people representing at least 50 churches. These leaders were challenged and are awaiting the final form of this thesis so that they can begin to apply it in their own contexts.

The Sunday school environments have been a different way to introduce the material. Because the participants in the classes did not choose or commit to an agreed-upon set of expectations, the presenter simply presented the biblical model and allowed for some conversation. Several families have expressed an interest to do the missional training. The conclusion from teaching in Sunday school settings is that those classes are not a substitute environment for the missional training course. In order to achieve a learning community where commitments and transformation might occur, more intentionality is necessary.

The presenter did solicit ideas for the future use of the missional training from the participants. They made several valuable contributions.

- 1) The participants were adamant that the congregation should be exposed to the biblical model of missional families because the congregation would want to embrace this important idea. Parents are more open to things that impact them

directly, and they are very invested in their children and their family. In addition, families want to feel like they are making a difference in the world.

- 2) Though they wanted the idea introduced widely to the congregation, the participants believed that a specific course would be the most effective way for families to fully comprehend and commit to missional family living.
- 3) A weekend seminar, which could give a full overview and introduce some of the tools might be an effective introduction, with a longer course as a second step.
- 4) Counseling might be an important addition for some of the families, especially as Family Covenants are written. Each family could go through one session with the church's counseling center as a check-in.

#### *Changing the scope of the project*

Given the limited scope of the pilot project, one could consider the use of the curriculum in different cultural contexts, with different aged children or no children as well as different models of family (single-parents or blended families). It seems that the missional family framework based on Luke 10 could be universally applied – that truth is at the heart of Luke's gospel. The gospel is for everyone and all households need the peace of Jesus Christ. Certainly, the components would need to be adjusted to ensure the greatest opportunity for the Spirit to work in the families that are a part of any form of the missional family curriculum.



## Conclusion

God has always been in the business of calling people and changing people. He has a pattern of calling his people and including children in the call and the covenant. This project showed the church walking alongside families, providing the tools which allowed God to work and ultimately forge change in their lives.

Minatrea names “[e]xpect to change the world” as one of the practices of missional churches. In describing this practice he writes,

Missions conform to spheres of influence. This means that missional responsibility begins among those with whom one has the closest relationships. It continues with establishment of new relationships among those who do not know Christ. Ultimately, it extends to all nations of the world.<sup>177</sup>

As churches make missional families, transforming relationships inside the home by the power of the Holy Spirit, families will impact the world. In a post-modern, non-church-going, no-truth culture, this is good news. God can work through and in brokenness, as he has always done, to bring about peace in the home and reconciliation with God in the world. May it be so! May God move in the church to bring about the passion, the creativity, and the wisdom to equip the family to be all that God intends.

Of course, it must be noted in conclusion that this project was a blip on the screen of life. So the larger question concerning its effectiveness asks the church and the family if they will continue with passion to be what God is calling them to be. Making an impact in the world requires a long-term, not a ten-week, commitment and the context where churches and families live and serve will continue to change.

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<sup>177</sup> Milfred Minatrea, *Shaped by God's Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 91-92.

Eugene Peterson writes:

There is a great market for religious experience in our world; there is little enthusiasm for the patient acquisition of virtue, little inclination to sign up for a long apprenticeship in what earlier generations of Christians called holiness.... Friedrich Nietzsche, who saw this area of spiritual truth, at least, with great clarity wrote “the essential thing in heaven and earth is ...that there should be a long obedience in the same direction; there thereby results, and has always resulted in the long run, something which has made life worth living.” It is this “long obedience in the same direction” that the world does so much to discourage.<sup>178</sup>

The religious experience which engaged the eight families of the pilot project was a good step in a process. Yet, it is only a beginning point of a process that asks families to be faithful and calls churches to equip families in their faithfulness to Lord Jesus Christ. Change in our lives and change in our churches will come only with prayer, passion, purpose, and through the power of the Holy Spirit by a “long obedience in the same direction.”

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<sup>178</sup> Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 12-13.

**Appendix A**  
**MISSIONAL FAMILY CONTRACT**

**As full participants in the Missional Families Training, We commit to the following for the six week period,**

- 1) Participate in 8:45 Sunday worship as a family (PreK and up)
- 2) Participate in Sunday morning program for five sessions
- 3) Participate in First Family Friday
- 4) Weekly, at home
  - 1) Eat together as a family at least 2x per week.
  - 2) Have a family play date at least 1x per week.
  - 3) Have family devotions at least 2x per week. (Resources provided)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### MISSIONAL FAMILY CURRICULUM COMPONENTS: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Learning Component	Learning Objective	Learning Methodology	Theoretical Framework	Motivational Strategies (Wlodkowski)	Teaching for Transformation & Commitment (Osmer)
<b>I. Missional Training Contract</b>	Introduce missional family activities; build environment in the home for learning and intentionality.		Cognitive Apprenticeship- guiding the families into apprenticeships for missional living.	<p><b>Attitude:</b> to develop positive self concepts for learning- 19. promote the learner's personal control of the context of learning.</p> <p><b>Competence:</b> To engender competence with communication- 57. Acknowledge and affirm the learner's responsibility and any significant actions or characteristics that contributed to individual or group learning.</p> <p>Attitude: To establish expectancy for success – 26. Use contracting methods.</p>	

<b>II. Take Pre- Assessment</b>	<p>Families will become more aware of their practices and behaviors.</p> <p>Families will evaluate their mastery of indicators for missional identity, formation, and mission (though they will not yet comprehend these concepts).</p>	Self-evaluation		<p><b>Attitude:</b> To establish expectancy for success: 22. Make the criteria of assessment as fair and clear as possible.</p>	Reflecting
<b>III. Learning Session 1</b>	<p>Families will understand the definition of the missional family and begin thinking about their own identity as a missional family.</p>			<p><b>Meaning:</b> To maintain learner's attention – 33. Provide variety in personal presentation styles, modes of instruction, and learning materials.</p>	
*Acknowledge expectations - engaging all participants and their experiences	<p>Families will understand their own desires and expectations for the learning experience.</p>	Lecture Group Discussion Group Building	<p>Dialogue between teacher and participant (Vella-Dialogue Education) Adults have reservoir of experience (Knowles-Androgogy) Move from ambiguity to self investment and participation (Bradford <i>et al.</i>, adult group development)</p>	<p><b>Inclusion:</b> create a climate of respect among adults- 8. Access learners' current expectations and needs and their previous experience as it relates to your course and training.</p>	Remembering Reflecting

*Self- Introductions of all participants	Families will begin to know each other and form a group	Group Building	Self investment and participation (Bradford <i>et al.</i> , adult group development)	<b>Inclusion</b> – engender an awareness of feeling of connection amongst participants: 1.allow for introductions.	
*Establish rationale for missional families project	Families will understand the issues facing the family and the models of ministry towards families	Lecture Group Discussion Group Building	Dialogue between teacher and participant (Vella-Dialogue Education) Adults have reservoir of experience (Knowles- Androgogy) Collaboration and Learning from Peers (Bradford <i>et al.</i> , group development)	<b>Inclusion:</b> Create a climate of mutual respect – 9. Explicitly introduce important norms and participation guidelines	Reflecting
*Present objectives of the missional training	Families will understand the objectives of the missional training, reviewing requirements and their own role within the training	Lecture Group Discussion Group Building	Clear achievement- based objectives (Vella – Dialogue Education) Dialogue between teacher and participant (Vella-Dialogue Education) Adults have reservoir of experience (Knowles- Androgogy) Establish ground rules and focus on process (Armstrong-adult small group strategy).	<b>Inclusion:</b> create a climate of respect-10. When issuing mandatory assignments or training requirements, give your rationale for these stipulations.	Reflecting

*Establish biblical definition and framework for missional families from Luke 10	Families will engage the text and understand the biblical framework of missional families.	Interactive Deductive and Inductive Bible Study; Group Discussion	Dialogue between teacher and participant (Vella-Dialogue Education)  Reflective-Observation – RO (Kolb- LSI)	<b>Inclusion:</b> To engender an awareness and feeling of connection among adults – 4. Share something of value with your adult learners	Encountering Sharing
<b><u>V.Assign Family Worksheet 1: Core Beliefs and Family Creed</u></b>	Families will engage a biblical text and through personal reflection will write their own Family Creed	Deductive & Inductive Bible Study Self-Evaluation Take home Assignment	Learning task where participants draw from their own experience, engage with new content, apply it and consider its application to their own context (Vella-Dialogue Education) AE (Active Experimentation) Learning Style (Kolb- LSI)	<b>Meaning:</b> To develop engagement with adult learners- 42. Use critical questions to stimulate learner engagement and challenge. <b>Competence:</b> To engender competence with assessment- 54. Use self-assessment methods to improve learning and to provide learners with the opportunity to construct relevant insights and connections.	Remembering Reflecting Encountering Sharing Deciding
<b>III. Learning Session 2</b>	Families will grow in their understanding of missional family identity, children will be included in learning process.			<b>Meaning:</b> To maintain learner's attention – 33. Provide variety in personal presentation styles, modes of instruction, and learning material	

*Welcome, Introductions and Prayer	The group will continue to form.	Group Building	Self investment and participation (Bradford et al, adult group development)	<b>Inclusion</b> – engender an awareness of feeling of connection amongst participants: 1.allow for introductions.	Remembering
*Reflect on Week 1, living the contract	Families will reflect and share experiences.	Group Reflection	Experienced behavior and feedback (Bradford et al, adult group development)	<b>Inclusion:</b> To engender an awareness and feeling of connection among adults. – 2. Provide an opportunity for multi-dimensional sharing.	Remembering Reflecting Sharing
*Reintroduce missional family concept	Families will engage the missional framework.	Content Review Group Discussion	Dialogue amongst participants (Vella- dialogue education) Abstract Conceptualization –AC (Kolb- LSI)	<b>Meaning:</b> To invite and evoke learner’s interests- 40. Selectively use examples, analogies, metaphors and stories.	Remembering Reflecting
*Introduce Family Systems Theory	Families will understand the family systems theory	Lecture Group Discussion	Content delivered through process (Vella-dialogue education)	<b>Inclusion:</b> To engender an awareness and feeling of connection among adults – 4. Share something of value with your adult learners	Remembering Reflecting
*Reflect and share Assignment 1 work and creeds	Families will reflect and share experiences	Group Reflection Collaborative Learning	Dialogue amongst participants (Vella- dialogue education) Experienced	<b>Inclusion:</b> To engender an awareness and feeling of connection among adults.	Reflecting Sharing



			<p>behavior and feedback (Bradford <i>et al.</i> ,adult group development)</p> <p>RO (Reflective Observational) learning style (Kolb- LSI)</p>	<p>5.Use collaborative &amp;cooperative learning.<b>Competence:</b> To engender competence with assessment – 52. provide opportunities for adults to demonstrate their learning in ways that reflect their strengths &amp; multiple sources of knowing.</p>	
<p>*Covenant Didache &amp; Dialogue-biblical Definitions, Balswick&amp; Balswick intimacy spiral</p>	<p>Families will understand the biblical concept of covenant and will understand the Balswick &amp; Balswick spiral and apply it to their own family life.</p>	<p>Lecture Group Discussion Group Reflect Collaborative and Cooperative Learning</p>	<p>Link explanations and illustrations to prior experience of learner, link learning activities to learner's current experience (William Tennant, adult group strategy) AC(Abstract Conceptualizations) Learning Style (Kolb- LSI)</p>	<p><b>Meaning:</b> To invite and evoke learner's interest – 36. Relate learning to adult interests, concerns and energizers</p>	<p>Remembering Reflecting Encountering Sharing</p>
<p>*Inter-generational Discussion on Identity: Following Jesus</p>	<p>Families will discuss the idea of following Jesus.</p>	<p>Group Discussion Group Reflection Cooperative Learning</p>	<p>Family Clusters (Olson and Leonard) RO (Reflective Observation) learning style (Kolb-LSI)</p>		<p>Remembering</p>
<p>*Family Bible Study Activity</p>	<p>Families will experience the biblical story of the calling of the disciples.</p>	<p>Kinesthetic Learning Role Play Games Group Reflection</p>	<p>AE (Active Experimentation) learning style (Kolb-LSI)</p>	<p><b>Meaning:</b> To develop engagement and challenge with adult learners - 47. Use invention,artistry ,imagination, and enactment to render meaning and emotion in learning.</p>	<p>Remembering Reflecting Encountering</p>

*Family Creed Review	Parents will share the Worksheet 1 work with their children.	Group Discussion Group Reflection Group Sharing			Sharing
<b>IV.Learning Session 3</b>	Families will begin to have a deeper understanding of missional family – and their own family life as vocation			<b>Meaning:</b> To maintain learner's attention – 33. Provide variety in personal presentation styles, modes of instruction, and learning materials	
*Welcome & check-in	The group will continue to form	Group Development	Self investment and participation (Bradford <i>et al.</i> , adult group development)	<b>Inclusion:</b> engender an awareness of feeling of connection amongst participants - 1.allow for introductions.	
*didache and dialogue about family as vocation	Families will understand the biblical concept of vocation and apply it to their own family life.	Lecture Group Discussion Group Reflection Collaborative and Cooperative Learning	Link explanations and illustrations to prior experience of learner, link learning activities to learner's current experience (William Tennant, adult group strategy) AC(Abstract Conceptualization)	<b>Inclusion:</b> To engender an awareness and feeling of connection among adults – 7. Emphasize the human purpose of what is being learned and its relationship to the learners' personal lives and	Remembering Reflecting Encountering Sharing

			s) Learning Style (Kolb- LSI)	contemporary situation. <b>Meaning:</b> To invite and evoke learner's interest – 36. Relate learning to adult interests, concerns and energizers	
*introduce “domestic church” – trace historically	Families will understand the domestic church concept of covenant and will apply it to their own family life.	Lecture Group Discussion Group Reflection Collaborative and Cooperative Learning	Link explanations and illustrations to prior experience of learner, link learning activities to learner's current experience (William Tennant, adult group strategy)	<b>Inclusion:</b> To engender an awareness and feeling of connection among adults – 5. Use collaborative and cooperative learning	Remembering Reflecting Encountering Sharing
*share as couples – how are we doing as a domestic church?	Families will individually reflect and discuss their own family life.	Group Reflection	Learning tasks where participants draw from their own experience, engage with new content, apply it and consider its application to their context. (Vella-Dialogue Education)	<b>Competence:</b> To engender competence with assessment – 54. Use self-assessment methods to improve learning and to provide learners with the opportunity to construct relevant insights and connections.	Remembering Reflecting Sharing
*group sharing	Families will share their individual family reflections.	Group Discussion Group Sharing Collaborative and Cooperative Learning	Experienced behavior and feedback leading to group growth and development (Bradford <i>et al.</i> , adult group development) RO (Reflective Observation) learning style (Kolb-LSI)	<b>Inclusion:</b> To engender an awareness and feeling of connection among adults – 5. Use collaborative and cooperative learning	Remembering Reflecting Sharing

<b><u>V. Assign Family Worksheet 2: Core Values and Family Covenants</u></b>	Families will engage a biblical text and through personal reflection will write their own Family Covenant	Deductive & Inductive Bible Study Self-Evaluation Take home Assignment	Learning task where participants draw from their own experience, engage with new content, apply it and consider its application to their own context (Vella-Dialogue Education) AE (Active Experimentation) Learning Style (Kolb- LSI)	<b>Meaning:</b> To develop engagement with adult learners- 42. Use critical questions to stimulate learner engagement and challenge. <b>Competence:</b> To engender competence with assessment- 54. Use self-assessment methods to improve learning and to provide learners with the opportunity to construct relevant insights and connections.	Remembering Reflecting Encountering Sharing Deciding
<b>III. Learning Session 4</b>	Families will understand the concept and need for their own formation: practicing being missional families			<b>Meaning:</b> To maintain learner's attention – 33. Provide variety in personal presentation styles, modes of instruction, and learning materials	
*Intergenerational welcome	The group will continue to develop.		Family Clusters (Olson and Leonard)		
*Watch Brady Bunch video	Participants will watch a model and evaluate their own family life in comparison to the model.	Visual learning	Family Clusters (Olson and Leonard)	<b>Meaning:</b> To invite and evoke learner's interests- 40. Selectively use examples, analogies, metaphors	Reflecting

*Draw a picture of your favorite thing to do as a family and share it with your family members	Participants will reflect on their own family life and identify significant experiences that build family life.	Kinesthetic Learning Visual Learning Collaborative and Cooperative Learning Personal Reflection Group Reflection Group Sharing	Family Clusters (Olson and Leonard) RO (Reflective Observation) learning style (Kolb-LSI)		Remembering Reflecting Sharing
*Didache and dialogue: Formation– what do you have to do to keep loving God and each other	Families will begin to identify significant and particular family experiences which help families build on their identity and grow them as missional families.	Lecture Group Discussion Group Reflection Collaborative and Cooperative Learning	Link explanations and illustrations to prior experience of learner, link learning activities to learner's current experience (William Tennant, adult group strategy)	<b>Meaning:</b> To invite and evoke learner's interest – 36. Relate learning to adult interests, concerns and values.	Remembering Reflecting Encountering Sharing
*Activity- choose 5 things that you need to do as a family that help you practice loving God and each other. Write each of them on a marshmallow	Families will choose their particular activities which are priorities to form them as missional families	Group Discussion Group Reflection Group Sharing Kinesthetic Learning Collaborative and Cooperative Learning	Learning task where participants draw from their own experience, engage with new content, apply it, and consider its application to their own context (Vella-Dialogue Education) CE (Concrete Experience) learning style (Kolb-LSI)		Reflecting Sharing Deciding

*Have a relay race carrying the marshmallow across the room and getting it into a cup. Share each other's practices.	Families will learn from each other.	Group Sharing Collaborative and Cooperative Learning	Family Clusters (Olson and Leonard)	<b>Inclusion:</b> To engender an awareness and feeling of connection among adults – 5. Use collaborative and cooperative learning.	Sharing
*Prayer for families	Group will continue to grow and understand spiritual significance of the process	Group building			
<b><u>V. Assign Family Worksheet 3: Core Practices and Family Commitments</u></b>	Families will engage a Biblical text and through personal reflection will write their own Family Commitment	Deductive & Inductive Bible Study Self-Evaluation Take home Assignment	Learning task where participants draw from their own experience, engage with new content, apply it and consider its application to their own context (Vella-Dialogue Education) AE (Active Experimentation) Learning Style (Kolb- LSI)	<b>Meaning:</b> To develop engagement with adult learners- 42. Use critical questions to stimulate learner engagement and challenge. <b>Competence:</b> To engender competence with assessment- 54. Use self-assessment methods to improve learning and to provide learners with the opportunity to construct relevant insights and connections.	Remembering Reflecting Encouraging Sharing Deciding
<b>II. Attend Family Night</b>	Families play together and engage other families in conversation and relationship-building.	Family Play Group Building Group Sharing	Family Cluster experience (Olson and Leonard)		

<b>III. Learning Session 5</b>	Families will grow in their understanding of missional contexts and calling.			<b>Meaning:</b> To maintain learner's attention – 33. Provide variety in personal presentation styles, modes of instruction, and learning materials	
*Recap the foundations for missional families and check-in	Families will review the missional framework and the group will continue to form.	Content Review Group Building	Dialogue amongst participants (Vella- dialogue education) AC (Abstract Conceptualization) learning style(Kolb-LSI)		Remembering Reflecting
*Didache and Dialogue: Vocation-- Review the Biblical passages for “joining God’s work in the world”	Families will identify the calling of the Missional Family and begin to apply the concept to their own family.	Lecture Group Discussion Group Reflection Collaborative and Cooperative Learning	Link explanations and illustrations to prior experience of learner, link learning activities to learner’s current experience (William Tennant, adult group strategy) AC(Abstract Conceptualizations) Learning Style (Kolb- LSI)	<b>Meaning:</b> To invite and evoke learner’s interest – 36. Relate learning to adult interests, concerns and values.	Remembering Reflecting Encountering Sharing
*Have families consider their own contexts (in concentric circles)	Families will identify their particular contexts.	Group Reflection Group Discussion Group Sharing	Learning task where participants draw from their own experience, engage with new content, apply it and consider its application to their own context (Vella-Dialogue	<b>Competence:</b> To engender competence with assessment – 51. Use authentic performance tasks to enable adults to know they can proficiently apply what they are	Remembering Reflecting

			Education)	learning	
*Share our contexts and callings in those contexts as a group.	Families will learn from each other.	Group Discussion Group Sharing Collaborative and Cooperative Learning	Experienced behavior and feedback leading to group growth and development (Bradford et al, adult group development) RO (Reflective Observation) learning style (Kolb-LSI)	<b>Inclusion:</b> To engender an awareness and feeling of connection among adults – 5. Use collaborative and cooperative learning	Remembering Reflecting Sharing
<b><u>V. Assign Family Worksheet 4: Core Contexts and Family Callings</u></b>	Families will engage a Biblical text and through personal reflection will write their own Family Calling.	Deductive & Inductive Bible Study Self-Evaluation Take home Assignment	Learning task where participants draw from their own experience, engage with new content, apply it and consider its application to their own context (Vella-Dialogue Education) AE (Active Experimentation) Learning Style (Kolb- LSI)	<b>Meaning:</b> To develop engagement with adult learners- 42. Use critical questions to stimulate learner engagement and challenge. <b>Competence:</b> To engender competence with assessment- 54. Use self-assessment methods to improve learning and to provide learners with the opportunity to construct relevant insights and connections.	Remembering Reflecting Encouraging Sharing Deciding
*Solicit Interview Volunteers	Interviewees will be identified.				
*Reflect on learning experience as	Families will evaluate their experience.	Content Review Self-Reflection	Dialogue amongst participants (Vella- dialogue	<b>Competence:</b> To engender competence with communication –	Remembering Reflecting



a whole.		Group Reflection Group Sharing Group Reflection	education)	60. Provide positive closure at the end of significant units of learning.	
*Pray as a Group	Group will continue to grow and understand the spiritual significance of the process.	Group building		<b>Competence:</b> To engender competence with communication – 60. Provide positive closure at the end of significant units of learning.	
<b>VI. Take Post- Assessment</b>	Families will evaluate their mastery of indicator for missional identity, formation and vocation.	Self- Reflection Self- Evaluation		<b>Attitude:</b> To establish expectancy for success: 22. Make the criteria of assessment as fair and clear as possible.	Reflecting
<b>VII. Conduct Post- Training Interviews</b>	Families will reflect on their experiences throughout the training.	Self- Evaluation Self- Reflection			Remembering Reflecting Sharing

**Appendix C**  
**MISSIONAL FAMILY ASSIGNMENTS**



***Finding Your  
Family Mission***

**Parent Worksheet 1:  
Core Beliefs and Family Creed**

**PRAY**

**READ:** Luke 9:18-27

**KEY QUESTION:** What do we believe as a family?

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** What we believe will inform who we are as a family.

**DIG:** What are the 2 questions Jesus poses in the text?

1)

2)

What are the answers?

1)

2)

What are the consequences of our belief? (Re-read vs 23-27)

What beliefs make you different from other families that do not profess Jesus as Lord?

This week, come to a consensus on your core beliefs. List them.

From your core beliefs, develop a creed of what you as a family believe.



# ***Finding Your Family Mission***

## **Worksheet 2: Core Values and Family Covenant**

### **PRAY**

**READ:** Luke 10:25-37

**KEY QUESTION:** How do we want our family to relate?

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** The way we relate is a reflection of God's relationship with us.

Our family life involves conflict and failing one another. This story gives us some clues how we should relate.

### **DIG:**

How does Jesus describe the law?

Describe the people who pass the man who "fell into the hands of robbers."

How are the members of our family hurt: beaten up and robbed? Think about each family member.

How do we pass each other by?

Remember Balswick's covenant spiral.

How do we show each other grace? How do we empower each other?

How do we want to relate to each other? (Gal 5:22 is a good place to start – remember these describe the qualities of a person who follows Jesus. How do we show these to each other?

What are the core values of your family? Which ones are different from other families that do not profess Jesus as Lord?

Use these values to write your family covenant.

As a family, we will....



# ***Finding Your Family Mission***

## **Parent Worksheet 3: Core Practices and Family Commitments**

### **PRAY TOGETHER**

**READ:** Mark 1:35-39 (also do a scan of the rest of the chapter and note the different ways that Jesus spends his time).

### **KEY QUESTION:**

How does the rhythm of our family life and schedule reinforce our Christian family identity?

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** We must intentionally shape each week in order to grow as Christian families.

### **DIG:**

- 1) How did Jesus' schedule reflect his identity?
- 2) Lay out your family "typical" week (use handout). You might want to do this as individuals. You have two copies. That said, it is meant to be a family calendar and not an individual calendar. This exercise needs to be less about guilt and more about reality.
- 3) Then lay out your ideal week (use handout). This week would be one where you did the things you needed to do but also found time to do the things that you want to do and the things that shape the people you want to be.

### **KEY QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

How do we "fit in" the things that matter the most?

How do we shape the places where we spend the most time to make those places where we are living our identity?

**This week, think about the core practices that must be a part of your regular family life to re-enforce your Christian family identity. Be prepared to discuss your core practices at our next session. These will begin to form your Family Commitment statement.**

# OUR “TYPICAL” FAMILY WEEK

Name \_\_\_\_\_

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
6 am							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12 pm							
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							

# OUR “IDEAL” FAMILY WEEK

Name \_\_\_\_\_

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
6 am							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12 pm							
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							



# ***Finding Your Family Mission***

## **Parent Worksheet 4: Core Contexts & Family Callings**

### **PRAY**

**READ:** Genesis 12:1-3, 26:4-5 , Matthew 5:13-16, 2 Corinthians 5: 16-21

**KEY QUESTION:** Where do we live out or faith?

**KEY PRINCIPLE:** We are called to be instruments of reconciliation joining God's work in the world.

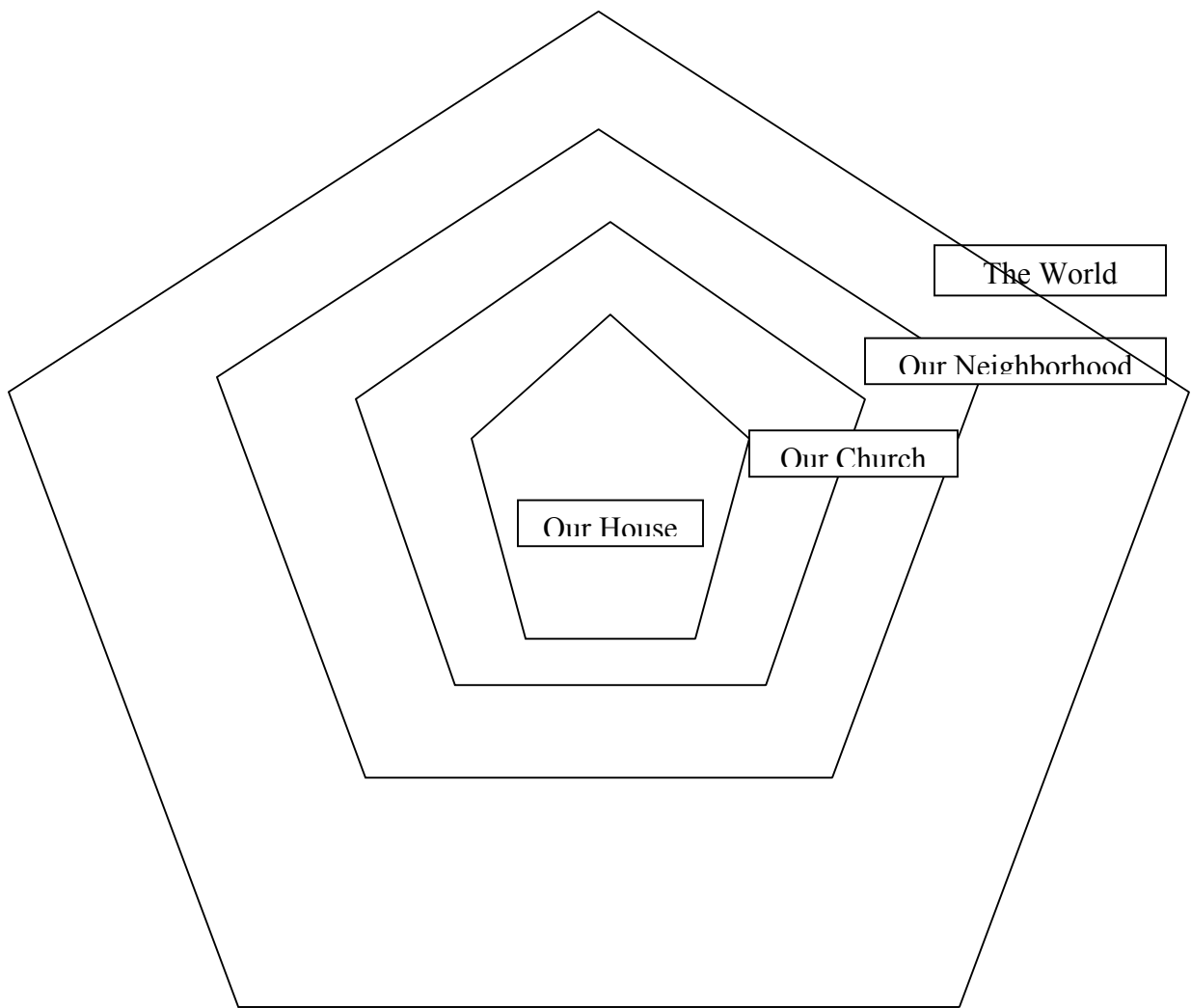
### **DIG:**

How was Abraham blessed to be a blessing to the nations?

What does it mean to be salt and light to the world?

How does your witness draw people to God?

Where do you practice the ministry of reconciliation?



What are the core contexts where we will live out and share our faith?  
How will we live our faith in these places?

At Home

At Church

At Work, Home, Other

In the World

Using those contexts, develop a Family Calling Statement. How and where will you live as a Christian family.



**Appendix D**  
**PRE AND POST-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

*Rate yourself and your family on scale of 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent)*

Our family spends quality time together. \_\_\_\_\_

Our family prays together. \_\_\_\_\_

We try to see & act on the needs of people around us. \_\_\_\_\_

Our kids know we love God. \_\_\_\_\_

Our family reads the Bible, individually and together. \_\_\_\_\_

Our neighbors know we are Christians. \_\_\_\_\_

We are good at listening to each other. \_\_\_\_\_

Our family regularly worships. \_\_\_\_\_

Our neighbors know we care about them. \_\_\_\_\_

Our kids know we love them and think they are special. \_\_\_\_\_

Talking about our faith is a natural part of our family. \_\_\_\_\_

Our family is involved in serving our community. \_\_\_\_\_

Our family knows how to extend grace and forgive each other. \_\_\_\_\_

We celebrate spiritual rites of passage. \_\_\_\_\_

Our family has a concern for what's going on in the world  
and how God is at work in the world. \_\_\_\_\_

What are the important characteristics of a family?

How is a Christian family different from just a good family?

**Appendix E**  
**PRE AND POST-ASSESSMENT DATA**

Pre-Assessments and Post-Assessment Evaluations																
Participant	H E		W E		H G		W G		H S		W S		H W		W W	
Period: PR (pre) or PS (post-assessment)	<i>P</i> <i>R</i>	<i>P</i> <i>S</i>	<i>P</i> <i>R</i>	<i>P</i> <i>S</i>	<i>P</i> <i>R</i>	<i>P</i> <i>S</i>	<i>P</i> <i>R</i>	<i>PS</i>	<i>P</i> <i>R</i>	<i>PS</i>	<i>PR</i>	<i>PS</i>	<i>PR</i>	<i>P</i> <i>S</i>	<i>PR</i>	<i>PS</i>
1. Our family spends quality time together.	7	9	8	9	7	8	5	9	8	10	9	8	8	8	8	8
2. Our family prays together.	6	9	8	10	7	8	7	8	7	7	9	6	9	8	10	10
3. We try to see and act on the needs of people around us.	7	8	8	9	5	8	8	9	6	8	5	7	6	7	8	8
4. Our kids know we love God.	9	9	10	10	8	10	9	10	9	10	10	9.5	10	9	10	10
5. Our family reads the Bible, individually and together.	8	9	8	9	7	7	5	9	5	6	9	7	9	8	9	10
6. Our neighbors know we are Christians.	8	9	10	10	7	9	8	8	7	9	6	8	9	8	10	8
7. We are good at listening to each other.	7	7	7	8	6	7	5	9	6	7	8	7.5	5	5	7	8
8. Our family regularly worships.	9	9	10	10	8	9	9	10	9	9	9	9	10	10	10	10
9. Our neighbors know we care about them.	8	8	7	7	7	8	8	8	5	8	7	8	4	4	7	8
10. Our kids know we love them and think they are special.	9	9	10	10	8	9	9	10	10	10	10	10	8	8	10	10
11. Talking about our faith is a natural part of our family.	7	8	10	9	9	9	9	10	5	10	9	9	9	8	8	10
12. Our family is involved in serving our community.	6	8	8	7	7	8	5	10	4	8	7	8	8	7	8	8
13. Our family knows how to extend grace and forgive each other.	6	7	8	8	8	8	8	9	8	10	8	8	8	6	5	7
14. We celebrate spiritual rites of passage.	8	9	10	10	8	9	9	10	5	9	9	9	8	9	8	9
15. Our family has a concern for what's going on in the world and how God is at work in the world.	7	9	10	9	7	8	6	9	8	10	5	7	7	8	6	9

**Appendix F**  
**MISSIONAL FAMILY CREEDS, COVENANTS,**  
**COMMITMENTS AND CALLINGS**

**Family E**

***Creed:***

We believe that God loves us so much that He sent His Son to live, die and rise again for us.

We believe that God, through His Holy Spirit, live in us and guides us.

We believe that God calls us to love each other and others just as He loves us, and to serve each other and others as He served his family and friends and the world.

We believe that God will forgive our sins if we ask him to and that we are to forgive each other and others, just as He forgives us.

We believe that we are to try to live our lives to be more like Jesus, that He is the example that we all should try to model.

We believe that God calls us to live, and we will try to live, with Jesus as the center of our lives as individuals and as a family.

***Covenant:***

We believe that God calls us to love each other and others just as He loves us, and to serve each other and others as He served his family and friends and the world.

***Commitment:***

Weekly Game Night, Meals Together, Daily Devotional & Prayer Together, Special Family Trips -Beach, Disney, Weekly Worship together -Church, Memorize Scripture Verses Together

***Calling:***

We believe that God calls us to live, and we will try to live, with Jesus as the center of our lives as individuals and as a family.

**Family G**

***Creed:***

I shall love the Lord my God with all my heart, all my soul, all my strength, and all my mind, and my neighbor as myself. (based on Luke 10:27)

We believe that:

God is love, and he loves all of us.

God is three persons: God the father, God the son, and God the holy spirit.

God the son is savior, lord, and friend.

God has a sovereign will and a unique mission for each of us individually and all of us collectively.

God has uniquely created us and is uniquely equipping us to trust and obey him.  
God places us in communities to serve him and to serve others.  
God offers us a walk of joy, laughter, trial, grace, endurance, mercy, and completion.  
God calls us to glorify him by following him: loving unconditionally with our heart,  
deepening our soul, building our strength, and learning.

***Covenant:***

Witnesseth:

Whereas, the G family acknowledges that God created the family as a sacred,  
domestic church to serve him and to give an authentic, powerful witness to the world,  
and

Whereas, God calls the family always to live as Christians,

Now, therefore, in consideration of the foregoing, each member of the G family  
hereby promises to rely fully on God's love, grace, and mercy to practice these ten  
gifts toward one another at all times:

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Gentleness

Faithfulness

Forgiveness

Self-control

In witness whereof, the G family members set their hands to duly execute this  
covenant effective for all time.

***Commitments:***

Family devotions. Family movie night. Eating together every night possible,  
Communicating openly, Forgiving each other.

***Calling:***

The calling of our family is to create and build an inviting and a welcoming home of  
love, faith, order, truth, joy, warmth, education, service, work, and relaxation and to  
provide opportunity for each of us to become responsibly independent and  
productively interdependent in order to serve one another, our church, our  
neighborhood, and the world through understanding and living the gospel of Jesus  
Christ

## **Family S**

### ***Creed:***

We believe that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. We believe the Bible is God's word. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells us and enables us to be more like Christ. We will live each day following Jesus' teachings, obeying him, teaching our children about Jesus and our Christian faith and instilling these beliefs in them. Living our life in this way will be fun! We will have a good time each day as we love God, love Jesus, and love each other.

### ***Covenant:***

As a family we will love each other unconditionally, no matter what someone else says or does. We will find joy and peace in our lives, no matter our circumstance. We will be patient, no matter how frustrating someone else's behavior might be. We will be kind and good even if someone else does not deserve it. We will be faithful. We believe God. You can always depend on and count on us to be who we say we are and to do what we say we will do. We will be gentle with each other and we will exhibit self control because we are filled with the Holy Spirit, who makes all of this possible. We will hold each other accountable to our covenant and truthfully, but tenderly bring each other back to this expectation when needed.

### ***Commitment:***

We commit time together each day. We will eat together, play together, read the bible and pray together. We will talk with one another and listen. The time we spend together matters most. That time will not be replaced by anything else- no matter the reason. As our lives change and evolve, we will be flexible as new schedules arise. However, our family commitment to time together will always come first.

### ***Calling:***

We promise to live our lives in a way that always builds relationships with each other and those around us- our extended family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and anyone that we meet or might know. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we expect deep and loving relationships to result since we value peace and goodwill over fighting and animosity.

## **Family W**

### ***Creed:***

We believe that Jesus Christ is God's only Son and that he saved us from our sins by dying on the cross. We accept God's grace through Jesus, and our purpose on earth is to glorify God and to be changed into the likeness of Christ.

### ***Covenant:***

To show the love of Christ to our family in all of our interactions with each other.

***Commitment:***

We are committed to following God's purposes for our lives by making difficult choices in an effort to align our priorities with those of God.

***Calling:***

In all we do, wherever we find ourselves, we will show Christ's love to the world through our words and our actions.

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## VITA

Marnie Melissa Mullen Crumpler was born January 29, 1968, in Atlanta, Georgia. At age six, she professed a child-like faith in her Lord, Jesus Christ, and was baptized by Dr. Russell Dilday at Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church. At 13, she sensed a call to “serve God with everything she had.” She could not have asked for or imagined the grace and goodness she has experienced.

She graduated from Wake Forest University in 1990 with a major in Religion. She attended Princeton Theological Seminary where she received her Master of Divinity. She was ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in 1994 at the Presbyterian Church of Bowling Green, Kentucky, where she served as Associate Pastor. She has also served as Associate Pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas (1995-1998), and as Bennett Chaplain and Instructor for Religious Studies, Peace College, Raleigh, North Carolina (1998-2002).

While in Houston, Marnie married Dr. Mark Crumpler and God has blessed them with two children, John Hunter (born in 1998) and Anna Melissa (born in 1999). These relationships have been her greatest joy and privilege. Marnie and Mark both serve as pastors on the staff of Peachtree Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia. Marnie serves as Executive Pastor. She will graduate from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in May 2008 with a Doctor of Ministry Degree. Her residence and thesis work focused on Christian Leadership. Delighting in family and ministry, Marnie looks forward to many more years of “life together” with her family and her congregation – *Soli Deo Gloria*.